



P.B. Shelley

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Riverside College Classics

SELECTED POEMS OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION
AND NOTES

BY

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To my Father

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PREFACE

No one can attempt to deal with Shelley in editorial fashion without being conscious at almost every step of the great value of Professor Dowden's biography of the poet, and of much of the other material mentioned in the Bibliography. I have tried, however, in preparing the Introduction and Notes, to maintain that independence of judgment which should characterize all Shelleyans, and to produce a text suitable indeed for student use, and conforming to classroom requirements, yet based on other than formally pedagogic principles. Literature, it seems, is not getting itself taught in our higher schools as vitally as we would like, despite immense critical apparatus. Is it because we are *too* judicial? Is it because a poem, like a person, invites affection before it yields its confidence?

G. H. C.

MACON, GEORGIA, December, 1906.

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FIELD PLACE

INTRODUCTION

THE LIFE OF SHELLEY

EVERY life is a symbol as well as a history, — a symbol, perhaps it were truer to say, because it is a history. The life of Shelley as a man, exceptional as it appears, is at one with the genius of Shelley as a poet, — it was impulsive; generously ardent; filled with the scorn of scorn, the love of love; eager and anxious to establish universal justice, freedom, and happiness; but pursuing too characteristically the dehumanized method of importing goodness into men rather than that of winning men into goodness. The course of his life moved from the tense yet dark mood of Paracelsus, exultant in denial and challenge, to the high affirmations of Aprile, —

“ . . . the over-radiant star too mad
To drink the life-springs.”

Had he lived, it is hardly possible that he would have failed to become at last

“ . . . a third
And better-tempered spirit, warned by both.”

On the fourth day of August, 1792, their first child was born to Timothy and Elizabeth Shelley, at Field Place, near Horsham, Sussex. He was called Percy, because that was a favourite name in the Shelley family, ancient in Sussex; and Bysshe, because that was the name of his paternal grandfather, a handsome, wealthy, and positive old gentleman, eventually made a baronet, who had been twice married, first to Miss Mary Catherine Michell, a Sussex heiress, who died after eight years of union, at the age of twenty-six; and again to Miss Elizabeth Jane Sidney,

another heiress, this time of Kent, and a descendant of Sir Philip. It is interesting to note that, according to Medwin, the impetuous Sir Bysshe eloped in each instance, and also that he was usually on bad terms with his son Timothy, one of three children — the others being girls — born in the first family.

Timothy Shelley was a good-hearted rural Englishman of social importance and limited intelligence. He believed in the things that it was proper and dignified to believe in, and he expected equal conformity from his fellows, perhaps rather more of it from his inferiors. He had attended University College, Oxford, and had got himself duly elected Member of Parliament. He did his duty by the Church, the State, and the family, and was hardly less willing than his father to play Sir Oracle. In October, 1791, he married Miss Elizabeth Pilfold, of Effingham, Surrey, a somewhat unfeminine yet attractive and gracious woman. She became the mother of seven children, — two boys, Percy Bysshe and John, separated in age by fourteen years; and five girls, Elizabeth, Mary, two Hellens — one of whom died very early — and Margaret. Their adventurous and well-favoured brother was adored by the little maidens, who, during his stay at home, "followed my leader" in all sorts of thrilling excursions about house and garden. Quiet old Field Place spelled to these half-quaking explorers a land of mystery and portent, of golden enchantment, — a background for the most moving legends, told fearsomely by Bysshe to his awed companions. He was fond, too, like other imaginative children, of inventing remarkable but shadowy situations in which he had played a leading part, or again, he would detach himself from all, and go brooding about alone in the moonlight, save for a watchful servant following discreetly at a distance.

After six secluded years of infancy and boyhood had passed, Bysshe became a pupil of the Rev. Mr. Edwards, of the village of Warnham, hard by. The four succeeding years

he spent chiefly in studying Latin and developing his strength by somewhat irregular exercise. At ten he was entered at Sion House Academy, Isleworth, near Brentford. Here he found himself one of some sixty pupils, ruled by a Dr. Greenlaw, "a vigorous old Scotch divine," writes Professor Dowden, "choleric and hard-headed, but not unkindly. . . . With spectacles pushed high above his dark and bushy eyebrows, the dominie would stimulate the laggard construers. Frequent dips into his mull of Scotch snuff helped him to sustain the wear and tear of the class-room." Shelley's slight, lithe, graceful figure was at once felt by the *hoi polloi* to present an irritatingly marked deviation from the norm, and they soon found that this was true also of his manner. His advent, accordingly, provoked roughness, persecution even, the more readily that the fagging system covered a multitude of petty tyrannies. Thomas Medwin, a cousin and biographer of Shelley, who was also a pupil at Sion House, describes him as "a strange and unsocial being." Preoccupied as he was with his visions and imaginings, he gave only a constrained attention to either his schoolmates or his tasks, yet he advanced steadily in learning, and was transferred at the age of twelve to Eton. Meantime his taste for the eerie as steadily asserted itself: he read avidly the sixpenny dreadfuls, and was particularly charmed with the gothic romances of Mrs. Anne Radcliffe. He was also significantly interested in physical and chemical experiments.

Shelley must have passed from Sion House with scant regret, for he seems there to have been an all too willing Ishmael, save for a single friend; yet at Eton his situation was hardly improved. Though he found more friends of a sort, he found also more persecutors among both masters and pupils, and he was so often thrashed that he became dully apathetic to the mere bodily pain. Dr. Goodall, the head-master, a man of solid worth, was seconded in the Lower School by Dr. Keate, powerful with book and birch alike. Shelley entered the Fourth Form under Keate's juris-

diction, and resided first with a Mr. Hexton as his tutor and mentor, and thereafter with George Bethell, renowned in the history of Eton for his dulness and his good-nature. But neither Keate's severity nor Bethell's absurdity moved Shelley much. He still lived aloof, for the most part, from the ordinary associations and requirements of school citizenship. So indifferent was he to the excitements of his five hundred fellows, and so fiercely resentful, not of physical hurt, but of injustice and the spirit of cruelty, that he came to be known as "Mad Shelley," and was baited time after time for their amusement by a crew of thoughtless tormentors. When pushed to the limit of his patience, says one, his eyes would "flash like a tiger's, his cheeks grow pale as death, his limbs quiver." Such boys as he did attract, however, — though few but one Halliday appear to have had an instinctive understanding of him, — loved him for his unswerving honour, his kindness, and his generosity. With Halliday, Shelley took many a pleasant ramble in the fields and woods about Eton, pouring out his young soul in fits and starts of hope and enthusiasm. "He certainly was not happy at Eton," wrote his friend in later years, "for his was a disposition that needed especial personal superintendence, to watch and cherish and direct all his noble aspirations, and the remarkable tenderness of his heart. He had great moral courage, and feared nothing but what was base and false and low." From the same source we learn that his lessons "were child's play to him." He moved through the formal curriculum with ease, and chose to add to his school work the outside reading of such classical authors as Lucretius and Pliny, with Franklin, Condorcet, and particularly Godwin — his future father-in-law — in his *Political Justice*. His fascinated interest in science, too, increased, and he ran not a few risks — both physical and magisterial — in his ardour for experiment. One likes to think of Shelley's spiritual kinship with Shakespeare's Ariel, creature of air and fire. Certainly, the young Etonian could have

found no better image of his own restless adventurings than the balloons¹ of fire he so often gave to the darkness, cleaving the gloom of night and steering their uncertain course into the company of moon and stars. Shelley's science was a matter of lore and wonder rather than of knowledge and precision. This attitude, already characteristic, was encouraged and strengthened by the boy's contact with Dr. Lind, a retired physician living close at hand in Windsor, whose memory Shelley always regarded with a lively gratitude, and who is immortalized in *The Revolt of Islam* as the friendly hermit, and in *Prince Athanas* as Zonaras, —

"An old, old man, with hair of silver white,
And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend
With his wise words, and eyes whose arrowy light
Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds."

Professor Dowden, in his admirably full and discriminating biography, speaks of two "shining moments" in Shelley's youth, which were to the boy as moments of revolution. His experiences at Sion House led him to take careful thought concerning individual and popular unhappiness, its causes and conditions, and finally to vow in youthful yet serious fashion that he would never oppress another nor himself submit to tyranny. In the dedication of *The Revolt of Islam* — originally *Laon and Cythna* — to Mary Shelley he writes : —

"I do remember well the hour which burst
My spirit's sleep. A fresh May-dawn it was,
When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,
And wept, I knew not why : until there rose
From the near schoolroom voices that, alas!
Were but one echo from a world of woes —
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

"And then I clasped my hands and looked around;
But none was near to mock my streaming eyes

¹ Shelley was fond, too, of sailing miniature paper boats. Cf. *Rosalind and Helen*, ll. 181-187.

Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground.
 So, without shame, I spake: 'I will be wise,
 And just and free, and mild, if in me lies
 Such power, for I grow weary to behold
 The selfish and the strong still tyrannize
 Without reproach or check.' I then controlled
 My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold."

If in the first moment Shelley felt his conscience quickened and dedicated to the cause of liberty, so in the second his imagination sought deliverance from the bondage of the merely horrible and sinister, and began instead to seek pure beauty and pursue it. This moment, too, he has fixed for us in his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*: —

"While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
 Through many a listening chamber, cave, and ruin,
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
 I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed.
 I was not heard, I saw them not;
 When, musing deeply on the lot
 Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
 All vital things that wake to bring
 News of birds and blossoming,
 Sudden thy shadow fell on me: —
 I shrieked and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

"I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
 To thee and thine; have I not kept the vow?

 They know that never joy illumed my brow
 Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
 This world from its dark slavery,
 That thou, O awful LOVELINESS,
 Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express."

These passages were conceived by a saner mind and written with a steadier hand than were the rather prolific effusions of Shelley's earlier youth, productions which began first at Eton to court pen and paper. Several fragmentary poems belong to this time, as also the extravagant romance, *Zastrozzi*, written probably in collaboration with

Harriet Grove, Shelley's cousin and sweetheart. Indeed, collaboration was something of a habit with the boy, not, it would seem, through any lack of confidence in his own creative powers, — for young Shelley was much less disturbed than his riper self by doubts concerning his own works, — but rather as the co-operative impulse of a spirit willing to share its enthusiasms with kindred spirits. He formed literary partnerships with his sisters Elizabeth and Hellen, with Medwin, and possibly also with Edward Graham, a friend of 1810-11. Graham may have been associated with the "Victor and Cazire" project, the appearance of a volume of poems that were wild and whirling indeed, but of which all the copies — save one, since reprinted — were apparently destroyed or suppressed. More probably, however, Elizabeth was the "Cazire" of the partnership. Medwin helped to shape the beginnings of a romantic *Nightmare*, and a poem about that persevering pilgrim, the Wandering Jew. Apart from their biographical interest hardly one of these works is worth naming.

Complacent Mr. Timothy Shelley had no manner of doubt that his son — peculiar in some respects though he seemed — would do about as well at Oxford as he himself had done, and the two travelled up thither amicably to arrange for Bysshe's entrance upon residence in University College at the beginning of the Michaelmas term of 1810. Mr. Timothy was graciously paternal, and even went so far as to introduce his son to a local printer named Slatter, with the suggestion that this man should indulge the youth "in his printing freaks." Rooms were secured, money matters adjusted, advice freely given, and the Polonius of Field Place departed in high good-humour with himself and all the world. He would have been interested, perhaps, to know what was passing in Bysshe's mind as he looked about him at Oxford, deciding what he liked and what he did not like. He liked the seclusion, the libraries, the natural beauty of the place; he did not like its sleepiness, its conservatism,

its orderly academic routine. One is strikingly reminded of Bacon's indictment of the Cambridge of his day: "In the universities, all things are found opposite to the advancement of the sciences; for the readings and exercises are here so managed that it cannot easily come into any one's mind to think of things out of the common road. . . . For the studies of men in such places are confined, and pinned down to the writings of certain authors; from which, if any man happens to differ, he is presently represented as a disturber and innovator." Shelley's mind — alert, original, though always in certain respects untrained — thought of many things out of the common road. His prime Oxford "innovation," it is true, was not carefully conceived or tactfully presented. It was a piece of folly for which he paid dear, but it was not dishonourable, nor was it even "dangerous" in any vital sense. Soon after his arrival he made the acquaintance casually of a fellow-freshman, Thomas Jefferson Hogg, a well-born and worldly-wise young man of considerable cultivation, easy opinions, and a half-cynical, half-amused, interest in the people he met and in the problems he heard them discuss and on occasion discussed with them. Ten years later Shelley thus described him, in his *Letter to Maria Gisborne*: —

"I cannot express
His virtues, though I know that they are great,
Because he locks, then barricades, the gate
Within which they inhabit; — of his wit
And wisdom, you 'll cry out when you are bit.
He is a pearl within an oyster shell,
One of the richest of the deep."

Hogg was strongly attracted by Shelley's looks, sincerity, and enthusiasms. The two met night after night in each other's rooms, and debated questions of literature, science, and history, on Shelley's side with fervour, on Hogg's with growing interest in this *rara avis*, an interest almost wonder. Hogg deeply respected Shelley's power of imagination and purity of

character, though he allowed himself to be entertained by his new friend's extravagances of manner and statement. He has left us in his *Life of Shelley* a detailed and picturesque account of the poet as he knew him during their six months' comradeship at college. He describes Shelley's figure as "slight and fragile, and yet his bones and joints were large and strong. He was tall, but he stooped so much that he seemed of a low stature. His clothes were expensive, and made according to the most approved mode of the day; but they were tumbled, rumpled, unbrushed. His gestures were abrupt, and sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward, yet more frequently gentle and graceful. . . . His features, his whole face and particularly his head, were, in fact, unusually small; yet the last *appeared* of a remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and in fits of absence and in the agonies (if I may use the word) of anxious thought, he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers quickly through his locks unconsciously, so that it was singularly wild and rough."¹ . . . His features were not symmetrical (the mouth, perhaps, excepted), yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I never met with in any other countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual; for there was a softness, a delicacy, a gentleness, and especially (though this will surprise many) that air of profound religious veneration that characterizes the best works, and chiefly the frescoes (and into these they infused their whole souls) of the great masters of Florence and of Rome." Only his voice did Hogg find displeasing, which seemed to him at first "intolerably shrill, harsh and discordant." Other friends and contemporaries speak also of this defect, but generally agree that it was observable only in moments of high excitement, and that Shelley's normal tones were winsome enough.

The two friends not only read and talked together, but

¹ Cf. "his scattered hair." — *Alastor*, l. 248.

Hogg would incredulously watch Shelley performing his always miraculous chemical experiments, or they would tramp about the countryside — Shelley seemed rather to float — and meet with adventures more or less exciting. Shelley cared little for the studies imposed upon him, and pursued his intellectual investigations with a free mind and in an entirely free manner within the privacy of his chambers, reading Plutarch, Plato, Hume, Locke, the Greek tragedies, Shakespeare, and Landor. He continued also to write, publishing at his own expense another Etonian romance, — and failure, — *St. Iregue, or The Rosicrucian*; some political verse; and a volume of miscellaneous poetry containing burlesques that pleased undergraduate taste, printed together with some more serious work produced spasmodically. That Shelley could have been willing at this date to publish, though anonymously, his crude and overstrained tale, and to push its fortunes with enthusiasm, attests perhaps better than any other single fact the condition of his critical judgment during the Oxford days. The poet in him must surely have been protestant the while! "I am aware," he wrote to Stockdale the publisher, after reaction began to be felt, "of the imprudence of publishing a book so ill-digested as *St. Iregue*." Stockdale, for his part, from whatever motive, stirred up trouble for Shelley at home by calling his father's attention to the unsoundness of his views and attributing this to his continued association with Hogg. Parental — chiefly paternal — intervention followed, only to confirm Shelley in what candour must designate as the heroic of the misunderstood. He vowed excitedly to defend his principles to the last, and to remain loyal to his friend at all hazards. His elders did not treat him with the wisdom born of humour and sympathy; they did not know the way to his heart, and had they known it they would have found that heart at the moment out of tune and harsh. Harriet Grove's affection was not proof against her alarm at Shelley's reputed heresies and his own exaggerated declarations of belief and unbelief.

She both loved and dreaded the strange youth: prudence prevailed, and in 1811 she married "a clod of earth," as Shelley described him, a Mr. Helyar. The boy felt the blow keenly, philosophized at length concerning it, and in a letter to Hogg written from Field Place during the Christmas vacation anathematized Intolerance, the cause of all his woes. He now planned that Hogg should marry Elizabeth, his eldest sister, who was affectionately consoling him at home. At least his friend should be happy.

Most, perhaps all, of this coil had been avoided if the prime actor therein had been less intense in behaviour, and his friends more willing to rely on his personal goodness and root docility. It is far from the mark to allow that Shelley was at any time a deliberate atheist. No man, it is safe to say, has felt more directly and continually than did he the existence of a beneficent Spirit. As an undergraduate, it is true, he was affected in his thought by the dogmas of materialism, but at no time ceased to postulate the being of an ultimate Intelligence and Love. It would be difficult to find in pure literature a more eager hunger and thirst for holiness and the Source of holiness than appears in Shelley's *Adonais*, *The Cenci*, *Hellas*, *The Revolt of Islam*, and *Prometheus Unbound*, not to speak of his just and reverent *Essay on Christianity*. With what he conceived to be the inherent taint of ecclesiasticism, indeed, he was constantly at war, like Chaucer, Milton, Ruskin, Carlyle, and Browning, in their diverse ways: though, unlike them, he attacked not merely the taint, but also, and with fierce energy, the entire churchly system. In this regard he betrayed unusual zest, as witness the implications of character in cardinal and pope in *The Cenci*, and the vivid pictures of the *Prometheus*, when compared with Chaucer's good-humoured revelations in *The Canterbury Tales*, and Browning's half-friendly condemnations of Blougram and his kind. Shelley unfortunately tended to identify always priesthood with tradition, the church with uncompromising

and persecuting conservatism. There is in his work no "povre Persoun of a toun," no Innocent XII. He did not habitually see both sides, though in one of his more pensive moods he actually expressed a desire to become himself a minister. "Of the moral doctrines of Christianity I am a more decided disciple than many of its more ostentatious professors. And consider for a moment how much good a good clergyman may do."¹ But for a moment only was this considered. Shelley wished characteristically to dispense for good and all with the "law" idea, and to bring the sorely suffering world out into the light of knowledge, virtue, love, and freedom. He knew what prayer meant; he was deeply moved by awe and wonder in the contemplation of the eternal mysteries. In brief, he was not the enemy of religion that he thought he was; he everywhere proclaimed the efficacy of the spirit of Love in healing and redeeming humanity. In later years Dante and Petrarch, in some respects, modified his aversion to historical Christianity, for through their works he came to feel keenly its spiritual beauty and power. His own religious instinct and attitude as a youth are suggested for us in two stanzas of Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*: —

"There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

"Serene will be our days and bright
And happy will our nature be
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Ev'n now, who, not unwisely bold,

¹ From a conversation with Thomas Love Peacock, reported by him.

Live in the spirit of this creed;
Y t seek thy firm support, according to their need."

The freshman of University College, however, with a passion for negations and for reform, was in no mood to consider his ways and be wise. He was but too "unwisely bold." Almost immediately after his return to Oxford, he arranged, with Hogg's connivance, if not collaboration, for the anonymous publication of a little pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. His motive in doing so was a mixed one, — partly sincere; partly, no doubt, dramatic. The argument, what there is of it, follows the beaten materialistic track, assuming throughout that sense-knowledge is all of knowledge, but the author seems to lament the "deficiency of proof" and to court sympathy and help. Not a few sedate dignitaries, to whom Shelley addressed copies of the pamphlet, with a specific request from "Jeremiah Stukeley" for counsel concerning it, fell into the trap and furnished their correspondent with much-desired controversial openings. Shelley had sent a copy to the Vice-Chancellor and to each of the Masters, and by his own Master he was interrogated and condemned. Upon "contumaciously refusing" either to acknowledge or to disavow the authorship of the paper, he was summarily expelled. From the stern conclave of Master and Fellows he rushed nervously to Hogg with the fateful news: Hogg instantly entered the breach, and drew upon himself a like examination, with a like result. If the judges hoped that submission might finally be made, they were disappointed, and the sentence had to stand. The anger of the authorities rapidly cooled, but that of Shelley and Hogg flamed and mounted. The next day, March 26, 1811, they left Oxford together for London. She who might have become more and more truly Shelley's *Alma Mater* had behaved in a moment of natural impatience as his *Dura Noverca*.

After visiting friends and skirmishing about London in

search of comfortable lodgings, which by some strange irony they found at length in Oxford Road, on Poland Street, — the "Poland," at least, reminded Shelley of "Thaddæus of Warsaw and of freedom." — the two young men settled down to their habitual comradeship, until interrupted by the appearance of Shelley's father, freshly fortified by Paley's *Natural Theology*. He had already written to Bysshe, requiring implicit future obedience and a rupture with Hogg as the price of his continued goodwill. He had also adjured Mr. Hogg, Sr., to assist in separating the two. Bysshe smiled mournfully at his father's blustering theological expostulations, but flared up at the conditions named as ensuring a welcome home. These he deliberately rejected, feeling that to forego liberty of action was to forego all, and that his ruth of character, as well as his personal affection for Hogg, demanded the persistence of the friendship. Hogg, however, soon withdrew or was withdrawn to York to read law, and Shelley, who planned to follow him later, and who was at this time half willing to study medicine, found himself for the first moment in his life concerned about the means to live. His father had cut off all aid, and Bysshe was constrained to accept secret gifts from his devoted sisters, and the more substantial assistance of his uncle, Captain Pilfold, who had a strong liking for the youth. The girls sent their contributions through sixteen-year-old Harriet Westbrook, a close friend in their school life at Mrs. Fenning's, Clapham. Harriet, being a resident of London, and possessing, therefore, the requisite freedom, bore many messages — both real and personal — between sisters and brother. Her father, John Westbrook, was a former tavern-keeper of some property, and her sister Eliza, a "Dark Lady," her senior by many years, exercised an almost maternal control of her. Harriet was a winsome lass, exquisitely neat and pretty, and of a cheerfully sentimental disposition. She shared the indignation of the Shelley girls at the ill-treatment accorded their brother, and she found that brother a

particularly attractive and interesting young man. Though at first much distressed at the perversity of his views, she rapidly came under the charm of his earnest manner and luminous deep-blue eyes, so rapidly that before many weeks had passed her heart began to whisper a secret. Shelley, for his part, knew nothing, or at least thought nothing, of such a possibility, but took a hearty pleasure in the comings of Harriet and in their conversations. He visited her at home and at school, and wrote frequently concerning the matters they discussed. Harriet's health thereafter began to fail, and Shelley, attributing this to some minor school "persecutions" and to the major offence of her father in insisting on her continued stay at school, again broke a lance with Intolerance. Shortly afterward, Harriet's preceptress discovered one of Shelley's letters in her possession, warned both her and his families, and even, it is said, suspended Harriet.

Meanwhile, through the intervention of Captain Pilfold and the Duke of Norfolk, Mr. Timothy Shelley's political chief, that gentleman became, in a measure, reconciled to his son, endowed him unconditionally with £200 a year, and consented to receive him at Field Place. Once again at home, Shelley found constraint even in his mother and Elizabeth, dearly as they loved him. Elizabeth scorned his desire that she should accept Hogg. To the latter Shelley wrote: "I am a perfect hermit, not a being to speak with! I sometimes exchange a word with my mother on the subject of the weather, upon which she is irresistibly eloquent; otherwise all is deep silence! I wander about this place, walking all over the grounds, with no particular object in view." He wrote not only to Hogg, but also to the Westbrook sisters and to a Miss Elizabeth Hitchener, a keen and nervously intellectual schoolmistress whom he had met at Captain Pilfold's house in Cuckfield.

The home of his cousin, Thomas Grove, near Rhayader, Wales, shortly succeeded York as Shelley's objective point.

In the midst of this beautiful country he dwelt a while, unhappy and distraught, writing copious letters and marking time in a dubious mood. Though the Westbrook ladies were also in Wales at this time, he did not see them, but, upon their return to London, was shocked to receive from Harriet several letters expressing mingled misery and entreaty, — misery at the thought of returning to a school where what she felt to be unbearable persecution awaited her, and entreaty for sympathy and help. Shelley responded warmly, counselling resistance, and even addressed a letter of advice and remonstrance to Mr. Westbrook, a letter which he declined to heed. Harriet wrote once again, appealing to Shelley to save her from fear and tyranny, and the high-hearted youth — he was now only nineteen — posted at once to London, saw Harriet, was amazed at her altered appearance, and enquired only when she falteringly told her love. Shelley doubtless met it as Jules felt in Browning's *Pippa Passes*: —

“ If whoever loves
Must be, in some sort, god or worshipper,
The blessing or the blest one, queen or page,
Why should we always choose the page's part?
Here is a woman with utter need of me, —
I find myself queen here, it seems! ”

In a letter to Hogg he speaks of his course as resembling rather “exerted action” than “inspired passion.” Late in August Bysshe and Harriet fled — a long, slow flight it was — by coach to Edinburgh, where they were married August 28, 1811.

Both husband and wife — despite financial troubles, for Shelley's father, deeply incensed against his son, again withdrew his aid — spent a bright honeymoon of five weeks in Edinburgh. Hogg shortly arrived from York, and was domiciled with his friends. Edinburgh in itself did not then attract Shelley, but the three shared one another's enthusiasms in matters literary, social, and political, even if Harriet

somewhat surprised Shelley and Hogg by persistently reading aloud from sententiously moral books. She was not a cultured woman, but only a bright, eager, indiscriminating schoolgirl, very willing to accept her liege's opinions, and yet a trifle positive in presenting hers. Shelley's increasing anxiety concerning income was allayed a little by the goodness of Captain Pilfold, who proved himself now, as before, a substantially corporeal guardian angel. From Edinburgh the travellers moved on to York, Bysshe shortly resolving to seek a personal interview with his father. He made a hasty trip into Sussex, as the guest of his uncle, only to be met with Mr. Shelley's curt refusal of help. A delightful conversation with Miss Hitchener, whose fine mental and spiritual qualities he characteristically overrated, was his only gain. Passing through London, he returned to York to find that Eliza Westbrook had come north and had assumed charge of his establishment. Though Shelley was aware of this plan, and had forwarded it, he seems to have been somewhat disconcerted. A strict domestic programme was inaugurated, and was meekly accepted by Harriet, who was as clay in Eliza's hands; and by Shelley, who could only look on and wonder; and by Hogg, who was not considered at all. Harriet, indeed, was feeling the need of protection from Hogg's unworthy interest, an interest which shortly cost him the comradeship, though not the continued friendship, of a grieved and troubled Shelley. From York the little company, still numbering three, but with Eliza in the place of Hogg, proceeded to Keswick and settled in Chesnut Cottage, near Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite. Here they stayed for several months, Shelley occupying himself with the beautiful nature aspects and with divers literary enterprises, including a collection of his shorter poems, another of essays, and a political novel, *Hubert Caurin*, of which nothing is now known. With the people of Keswick Shelley had little to do, though he met and admired friendly William Calvert, and through him became

acquainted with Robert Southey. The older poet — different in temper and theory as the two were — showed the younger much practical kindness, but though Shelley met his early advances with some eagerness, he soon afterward wrote to Miss Hitchener: "I do not think so highly of Southey as I did. . . . I do not mean that he is or can be the great character which once I linked him to; his mind is terribly narrow compared to it. . . . It rends my heart when I think what he might have been!"

The Duke of Norfolk was again to act as mediator between the Shelleys — father and son — in response to a manly letter from Bysshe requesting this service. The matter was not at once adjusted, but negotiations were opened, and before long the young couple and Miss Westbrook were invited to Greystoke, the Duke's neighbouring seat. Shortly afterward it was intimated to Shelley that an income of £2000 annually might become his if he would consent to entail the estate in favour of a possible son or of his brother John. Shelley, who strongly opposed the law of primogeniture and believed that he had no moral right to accept this tentative suggestion, declined it with indignation and without parley. Should he himself inherit the estate — which he thought unlikely, as he anticipated an early death — he purposed to share it with his friends. Before this discussion arose, however, Shelley, by the advice of the Duke, had sent his father a letter so just and kind that a favourable response was induced, and by January, 1812, an annuity of £200 was again settled upon him. This, with a similar sum granted by Mr. Westbrook for Harriet's subsistence, saved the young people from what had become a really acute though temporary poverty.

It will be recalled that Shelley, while at Eton, was much interested in Godwin's revolutionary book, *Political Justice*. His interest had so grown that when he now heard casually of Godwin's continued physical existence — he had supposed him dead — he eagerly penned a letter overflow-

ing with respect and admiration, for Shelley the proselyte was no less ardent than Shelley the proselytizer. Godwin found this communication sufficiently interesting to warrant a reply inviting particulars of the writer's history. These Shelley immediately supplied, and a steady correspondence followed. — Godwin's letters being friendly and hortative, Shelley's tractable but animated. In one of these Shelley announced his purpose of going into Ireland, there to aid in Catholic Emancipation, asking and receiving much good advice from Godwin concerning this course. Miss Hitchener was invited to join the party, but declined, and Shelley, with his wife and sister-in-law, left Keswick February 2, 1812, arriving in Dublin, after tiresome delays, ten days later.

In parlous Ireland Shelley found work at first to his liking. Caring little for Catholic Emancipation in itself, — he owned "no cause," he wrote to Godwin, "but virtue, no party but the world," — he nevertheless threw himself eagerly into the service of the politically oppressed. He issued an *Address to the Irish People* that created some stir, and, until dissuaded by Godwin, sought to form a peaceably revolutionary "Association of Philanthropists." Harriet and he must have greatly enjoyed their methods of distributing the pamphlets he wrote, sometimes throwing them from the window to "likely" persons. On the 28th Shelley spoke with some acceptance at a public meeting, and thereafter met, though with scant satisfaction, several of the leading Irish patriots. He encountered praise, blame, and suspicion, but made himself a manful missionary until personal reaction set in, a reaction due partly to the failure of his efforts to modify the situation in any practical way, and partly to Godwin's rather chilling criticisms. At length, on April 4, he left Ireland for Holyhead, and, after several wandering days, pitched tent at Nantgwillt, North Wales. Here he penned one or two literary studies, and met and liked Thomas Love Peacock, a liberal, cultured, pleasing man and writer, thenceforth Shelley's friend. But again stakes were up, and the

pilgrims away, first to the Groves' home, near by, and then to Chepstow, and to Lynmouth, Devon. Amid the entrancing coast scenery they stayed two months, and here they welcomed the advent of Miss Hitchener, whose extraordinary charms, however, slowly lapsed into commonplace in Shelley's as in Harriet's thinking. From "soul of my soul" she became, through several transitions, "Brown Demon." Much reading and writing went on in Lynmouth, and at this time Shelley was busily at work upon his *Queen Mab*. Here, too, he wrote his birthday sonnet and his blank verse apostrophe to Harriet, and penned his energetic *Letter to Lord Ellenborough* concerning the prosecution of one Eaton, a poor bookseller, for publishing part of Paine's *Age of Reason*. The Devon coast saw Shelley often engaged in the boyishly serious business of scattering his revolutionary writings to the world at large through the media of bottles, sea-boxes, and fire-balloons. The arrest of his manservant, however, while distributing copies of the Shelleyan *Declaration of Rights*, decided the swift mind. When Godwin arrived unexpectedly in Lynmouth, September 18, he found his disciple flown.

During the next year Shelley travelled variously in all parts of the United Kingdom. He settled first at Tan-yr-allt, near Tremadoc, Carnarvonshire, and turned from the reform of humanity to that of nature, earnestly aiding W. Alexander Madocks, M. P., in his attempt to reclaim several thousand acres of land from the sea. While visiting London in order to raise a subscription for this project, he seized the opportunity to visit the home of Godwin, where he met, besides the old philosopher, — who looked, Harriet thought, like Socrates, — the second Mrs. Godwin also, her young son William, and Fanny (Imlay) Godwin, born to Mary Wollstonecraft before she became Godwin's first wife. Clara Jane Clairmont, daughter of Mrs. Godwin and her first husband, and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, daughter of Godwin and his first wife — a sufficiently com-

plicated family, this! — were absent during most of the time of Shelley's stay in London, and, though both were soon to become closely concerned with the life of the poet, he has left on record no minute of his impressions, if he then saw them. While in London Shelley made other friends also, and sought out Hogg, permitting such renewal as was possible of their old association. Miss Hitchener, her pedestal being lost, took her final leave of Shelley hospitality. "We were entirely deceived in her character as to republicanism," wrote Harriet to an Irish friend, Mrs. Catherine Nugent, "and in short everything else which she pretended to be." By November 15 Tremadoc was again in sight, and months of happy domesticity followed, Shelley reading much, continuing *Queen Mab*, relieving the distresses of the poor about him, and consuming his soul in indignation at the imprisonment of Leigh Hunt for a libel upon the Prince Regent. Late in February, 1813, a burglarious attack was perhaps made upon the poet's home, and his life seems to have been in some danger. At all events, the incident¹ was nervously magnified by Shelley into "atrocious assassination," and, convinced that some sinister villain was on his track, he left again for Dublin. Thence the young family journeyed to the beautiful Killarney Lakes, and by April were again in London.

Queen Mab, a long, uneven, unrhymed poem, lyric and heroic, far more representative of the boy Shelley than of the man, was completed in the spring, and was printed for restricted distribution. In 1821 its author described it as "a poem . . . written by me at the age of eighteen — I dare say, in a sufficiently intemperate spirit. . . . I doubt not but that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition ;

¹ In an interesting article in *The Century Magazine* for October, 1905, *A Strange Adventure of Shelley's*, Margaret L. Croft presents evidence that one Robin Pant Evan, a rough Welsh sheep-farmer, deliberately broke into Tan-yr-allt in order to frighten away Shelley, his ire having been aroused at the poet's humane practice of killing his neighbours' hopelessly diseased sheep.

and that, in all that concerns moral and political speculation, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature." During the same year he wrote to Horace Smith: "If you happen to have brought a copy of Clarke's edition of *Queen Mab* for me, I should like very well to see it. — I really hardly know what this poem is about. I am afraid it is rather rough." The *Ianthe* in the poem gave her name to Shelley and Harriet's first child, *Ianthe Elizabeth*, born the following June. Shelley's September sonnet, *To Ianthe*, expresses the growing love he bestowed upon the infant. After her coming a removal was made to Bracknell, in Berkshire, at the suggestion of Mrs. Boinville, a cultured and high-principled woman, and her daughter, Cornelia Turner, whom Shelley had met in London. From Bracknell they went into the Lake country, and thence to Edinburgh again, with Peacock, but by December were back in London, securing a temporary home in Windsor, near Bracknell. Shelley was now feeling keenly the need of additional income, and had lately paid a clandestine visit home. He wrote once again to his father for consideration, urgently, but in vain. Such money as was imperatively necessary to him, therefore, he raised on post-obit bonds.

The biographers of Shelley agree that shortly after the birth of her first babe a certain insensibility, always latent in Harriet's temper, began to show itself in peculiar fashion. She lost, almost completely, her interest in books and reading, in intellectual adventures, and even in the domestic responsibilities attaching to her as wife and mother. That Shelley felt deeply this diminution of her customary cheerfulness, this new, strange aloofness of his formerly bright-natured wife, is amply evident from the testimony of his poems and letters. With an aching heart he watched the too rapid course of the chill current of indifference. Sometimes he would turn to the Boinvilles in perplexity and doubt, seeking help for a problem he hardly knew how to voice.

In the society of his thoughtful friends he found stimulus for an increasingly dejected spirit, and for the time perhaps succeeded in forgetting Harriet. On her side, no doubt, Harriet also experienced disillusion. She was no longer a fanciful schoolgirl, but a young matron who looked upon her husband's exceptional views and manners with less partial eyes than before. Now he was reading rapturously with Cornelia Turner in the Italian poets, now debating ardently some religious or political question, now impulsively wandering abroad or losing himself in fantastic abstractions, but she, who had given herself to him for all time, was not receiving due consideration, and did not feel the necessity of making her gift a progressive one. They were husband and wife, and the wife had no fear of losing the husband. If Shelley hoped to break through this film hardening into a barrier, Eliza's constant presence, which had become very irksome to him, and Harriet's¹ carelessness toward Ianthe, made the attempt more and more difficult. Through the advice of her sister and father, too, Harriet was beginning to press for a better social station in life. Was not Shelley a baronet-to-be and heir to a great estate? It was becoming surely apparent that the relation between these two had never been a vital one, but only for a time vitalized. Despite a second marriage ceremony, entered upon March 22 for legal reasons, and despite Shelley's passive acceptance of the duty of patience, Eliza and Harriet, by April, 1814, had taken their departure for a season, and Shelley had written the mournful stanzas printed on page 1. The following month he addressed a poem to Harriet, concluding with this appeal:—

"O trust for once no erring guide!
Bid the remorseless feeling flee;
'Tis malice, 'tis revenge, 'tis pride,
'Tis anything but thee;
O deign a nobler pride to prove,
And pity if thou canst not love."

¹ Harriet's last letters to Mrs. Nugent, however, contain several very affectionate references to Ianthe.

But Harriet remained away, settling now at Bath, while Shelley walked despairingly the streets of London. He called not infrequently at the home of his master, Godwin, whose financial condition was even worse than his own, and whom he was devotedly anxious to relieve. One midsummer day he met — probably then for the first time — Godwin's daughter Mary,¹ seventeen years of age, pale, earnest, and beautiful. Their intellectual sympathy was immediate, and after but a month of acquaintance each knew but too certainly the feeling of the other. As yet no word of disloyalty to Harriet was uttered on either side. Shelley did not at the moment believe that an honourable release was open to him, and Harriet, for her part, was now beginning to regret their division. By July, however, Shelley had come into possession of what he thought unquestionable evidence of his wife's unfaithfulness to him, evidence which he continued to believe, though it was later modified in some important particulars, until he died. Concerning its actual value it is difficult if not impossible to pronounce, but there can be no doubt of Shelley's painful sincerity in relation to it. Neither he nor Mary Godwin hesitated to accept what seemed to them a justifying condition of their present love and, indeed, of their later union. Writing to Southey in 1820, Shelley declares himself "innocent of ill, either done or intended; the consequences you allude to flowed in no respect from me. If you were my friend, I could tell you a history that would make you open your eyes; but I shall certainly never make the public my familiar confidant."

When Shelley, about July 14, suggested to Harriet the desirability of an understood separation, she did not openly oppose him, thinking it probable that his regard for Mary

¹ Harriet's first reference to Mary, in her correspondence with Mrs. Nugent, has pathetic interest: "There is another daughter of hers, who is now in Scotland. She is very much like her mother, whose picture hangs up in his (Godwin's) study. She must have been a most lovely woman. Her countenance speaks her a woman who would dare to think and act for herself."

Godwin would shortly cease and that he would return to her. This attitude of compliance gave Shelley a wrong impression; he arranged for her material welfare, and withdrew with a feeling that all would be well, and that Harriet concurred in the course he had resolved to pursue. That he was mistaken in this supposition made Harriet's loss only the more grievous, but both Shelley and Mary believed that the new union was to prove best not merely for them but for Harriet as well, whose "interests," as he conceived them, Shelley constantly consulted. On July 28, 1814, Mary Godwin and Percy Bysshe Shelley, accompanied by Clara Jane Clairmont, left London for the Continent, and the next day, at Calais, the poet wrote in his journal: "Suddenly the broad sun rose over France."

The tour that followed was a brief one, cut short by lack of funds and by difficulties arising in England. While it lasted, however, Shelley and Mary had opportunity to realize the strength and virtue of their love, in a time of physical and mental stress. Spending but a few days in Paris, they proceeded on foot (Mary riding a donkey) to Charenton. There they replaced their little beast by a sturdy mule, and on reaching Troyes bought an open carriage. By these means, after many annoyances, they at length arrived at Neuchâtel, and at Brunnen on Lake Lucerne. *En route* Shelley had written to Harriet, urging her to meet them in Switzerland, and assuring her of his intention to remain her friend. At Brunnen he began the fragment entitled *The Assassins*, a romantic tale of some power. After a brief stay here and at Lucerne, the travellers turned homeward, following the Reuss and the Rhine. The beauty of the latter river, from Mayence to Bonn, greatly impressed Shelley and influenced the scenic setting of *Alastor*. Rotterdam was reached September 8, and London once again a week later.

During the remainder of the year Shelley and Mary suffered seriously from the want of income. Although Godwin indignantly refused to condone Shelley's course, he

freely accepted money from his scant purse and even asked for more. There is unconscious dramatic irony lurking in a passage concerning Godwin in one of Shelley's early letters to Miss Hitchener: "He remains unchanged. I have no soul-chilling alteration to record of his character." Harriet, too, was losing patience and troubling both Shelley and the Godwins with increasing demands. On November 30 she gave birth to a boy, Charles Bysshe, who, with Ianthe, was soon to become the subject of Chancery litigation. Peacock was proving himself an old friend; Fanny Godwin was secretly kind; but for the most part Shelley and Mary were left severely alone save for the companionship of Hogg, who called often, and Jane Clairmont (Claire), who declined to return home. Omnivorous reading solaced the evil time, — Anacreon, Coleridge, Spenser, Byron, Browne of Norwich, Gibbon, Godwin, etc. Claire, alert and olive-hued, often disturbed the household with her fears and doubts concerning the supernatural, and they were not unrelieved to see her depart, in May, 1815, for a stay in Lynnmouth. Shelley, for his part, had other fears, and was now moving from spot to spot in London, protecting himself as he might against the vigilance of the bailiffs. The new year brought important changes. Sir Bysshe passed away on January 6. Mr. Timothy Shelley became a baronet in his stead, and the poet succeeded his father as heir-apparent to the title and a great estate. He went down to Field Place, but was not welcomed. The question of entail again came up, and though Shelley declined to change his attitude, he was willing to sell his own reversion. Eventually he planned to dispose of his interest in a small part of the property for an annual income of £1000 during the joint survival of his father and himself, but Chancery would not later permit this plan to be realized. Money was advanced to meet his most pressing needs, and it is worthy of note that he immediately settled £200 a year upon Harriet, a like sum having been continued by Mr. Westbrook.

Shelley's health had of late become seriously impaired, and was not improved by the shock consequent upon the death, March 6, of Mary's first infant, hardly more than a fortnight old, and by the continued alienation of Godwin, whom he was aiding steadily. He bore Godwin's bitter letters very patiently save for one final outbreak of feeling: "Do not talk of *forgiveness* again to me, for my blood boils in my veins, and my gall rises against all that bears the human form, when I think of what I, their benefactor and ardent lover, have endured of enmity and contempt from you and from all mankind." A trip of several days' duration up the Thames to Lechlade, in the company of Mary, Peacock, and Charles Clairmont, Claire's brother, did much to restore the poet to health and good spirits. On his return to Bishopsgate he conceived and that autumn wrote the moving revelatory poem, *Alastor*, the first of his really sure and vital works, published the following March. Peaceful months followed, of study and composition, whose sunshine was made the brighter by the birth of William, Mary's second child, January 24, 1816. But Godwin's attitude, the coldness of others, and the failure of the lawyers satisfactorily to adjust financial matters, — he was again dependent upon his father's voluntary advances, — led Shelley to heed the invitation of a voice of whose charms he could no longer be insensible. It was Switzerland's recall of him that he heard and obeyed. Byron, whom he had not yet met, but with whom Claire had become only too well acquainted, was soon to arrive in Geneva, and the infatuated girl, keeping her secret from Shelley and Mary, asked and was permitted to become one of the party. Early in May, 1816, the trio, with little William, started again for Paris. They reached Geneva about the 14th, and shortly afterward Byron appeared. The two poets, though associated as contemporaries, apostles of revolution, were yet of very different fibres. — Byron, proud, passionate, fitfully purposive, like an alien bird oaring and flapping close to earth; Shelley, keen,

luminous, mild, sun-adventuring, sailing the upper ether of thought and love with tense but tireless wings. Each knew the other for a poet, — Shelley has drawn the two portraits for us in *Julian and Maddalo*, — and they spent eager hours together and with Polidori, Byron's young Anglo-Indian physician, cruising about the lake, or exploring its shores. During this time Byron wrote some of the best stanzas of his *Childe Harold*, Shelley conceived his *Mont Blanc* and *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, and Mary began her famous romance, *Frankenstein*, inspired by a ghostly conversation between the poets and Polidori. The Shelley group had meanwhile secured a cottage near Coligny, and Byron was living at the Villa Diodati. While they circumnavigated the lake, Byron produced his *Prisoner of Chillon* and Shelley stored up countless memories of joy and beauty. After a visit of high emotion to Chamouni, Shelley and Mary received a rather melancholy letter from Fanny Godwin, and a month later left Geneva for Versailles, Havre, and Portsmouth.

The year 1816 was a fatal one for several of Shelley's friends and connections. The death of Sir Bysshe was followed during the autumn by those of Fanny Godwin and Harriet Shelley, each of these women dying by her own hand. Fanny, who had been growing of late more and more dejected, feeling the unkindness of her stepmother and other relatives, and deprived of the immediate counsel of Shelley and Mary, decided that she was a useless cumberer of the ground, and took laudanum at Swansea, October 10. She had written only a week earlier an affectionate letter to Mary, who with Shelley was now staying at Bath, in which all her thoughts unselfishly went out to the welfare of Godwin and the Shelleys. These were her sincere mourners. "Our feelings are less tumultuous than deep," wrote Godwin to Mary; and she to Shelley, who went to Swansea suffering great anguish of spirit: "If she had lived until this moment, she would have been saved, for my house would

then have been a proper asylum for her." Two months later the body of Harriet was found in the Serpentine River, after a disappearance of three weeks. She had, even as a school-girl, remotely contemplated such an ending, and now, with Shelley gone (though he was at this very time seeking her anxiously, that he might relieve her distresses), with her father and sister angered against her, and with a last friend unwilling longer to forward her happiness, she took the plunge with a despairing calmness. If she had wandered morally, she felt at least as justified as Shelley himself, whose social views were not capable of a uniformly beneficent application to concrete cases. Love, as she understood it, seemed indeed, by harsh evidence, thrown from its eminence. Yet her death was far less the specific outcome of Shelley's conduct than it was the due result of a fatal flaw in her own character, and though Shelley felt acute and abiding regret, he cannot be said to have experienced remorse. We may briefly compare, in passing, the matrimonial beginnings of Shelley with those of his grandfather, and note the untimely closing of the waters over Shelley's head as over Harriet's. We must pass rapidly over the accompanying and dependent events of this season, — the renewal of old friendships, Godwin's persistent difficulties, the generous literary encouragement of Shelley by Leigh Hunt, the reconciliation of Godwin to the poet, and the formal ceremony of marriage between Shelley and Mary at St. Mildred's Church, London, December 30.

The care of his children, Ianthe and Charles Bysshe, had been reluctantly and at her earnest request committed to Harriet by their father, who now sought to gain possession of them. His right to do so was stoutly contested by the Westbrooks, who filed a suit in Chancery to determine the question. They represented that Shelley, as the deserter of Harriet and the author of *Queen Mab*, was not a proper person to have control of the children's upbringing and education; while Shelley's counsel argued that the poet

was justified in leaving Harriet, and that he had since that time faithfully supplied her needs, while it were intolerable tyranny to wrest his children from him merely on account of his intellectual conclusions. After two months of legal conflict the case was decided against both parties. Lord Eldon postponing final judgment until July 25, 1818, but declining to grant the custody of the children to either Shelley or Mr. Westbrook. At length it was determined to place Ianthe and Charles in the care of Dr. and Mrs. Hume, of Brent End Lodge, Hanwell, persons nominated by Shelley and paid chiefly by him and partly by the interest of a fund previously settled upon the children by Mr. Westbrook. Shelley keenly felt the injustice of the judgment, but preserved a fine attitude throughout the proceedings. During this time he and Mary, with their child William, were for the most part resident at Marlow on the Thames. Before going thither, however, Shelley had met Keats, Hazlitt, and J. H. Reynolds, as fellow-guests of Leigh Hunt, and also Horace Smith, who became a close friend and sympathizer. At Marlow he spent more than a year of busy authorship, hospitality, and beneficence. As writer, he produced, among other pamphlets and poems, some remonstrant lines to Lord Eldon, *Prince Athanase*, part of *Rosalind and Helen*, and *Laon and Cythna*, — afterward *The Revolt of Islam*, — a stirring and eloquent prophecy of the triumph of the spirit of love and liberality. "I have attempted," he wrote to his publisher, "in the progress of my work to speak to the common elementary emotions of the human heart, so that though it is the story of violence and revolution, it is relieved by milder pictures of friendship and love and natural affections." As host, he entertained Peacock, Godwin, the Hunts, William Baxter, and Horace Smith, besides Claire and the little newcomer, Clara Allegra, daughter of Byron. As friend and helper, the poor of Marlow knew and loved him. On September 2, 1817, after the completion of *Frankenstein*, a third child was born to Shelley and Mary, whom

they named Clara Everina. Godwin's well-known novel, *Manderilla*, appeared during November, and Shelley corresponded freely with its author as both admiring critic and purse-opener.

"I think we ought to go to Italy," wrote restless Shelley to Mary late in 1817, after much earnest discussion of ways and means. Shelley's failing health, medical advice, Mary's own inclination, and the desire to help Claire toward an understanding with Byron, all conspired to this end. March 12, 1818, saw the travellers once again — for Shelley now the last time — leaving the ancient cliffs of Dover for Calais. Had the poet known that he was to see his native land no more, his heart would have gone out to her in a high song of farewell, for despite his passionate desire to compass the reform of many of her laws and institutions, his life and letters at many points affectionately attest the strength of his love for England.

The four closing years of Shelley's brief life were the happiest and most productive. Indeed, had these been denied him, his works would hardly have won large place in the memories and affections of men. Animation was his, bright and breathless; power was his, earnest and unmistakable; but time and place were yet to bring their calm and their counsel to his too agitated spirit. What the clear sunny skies of Italy had done for Chaucer and Milton, what they were to reveal to Browning and his lyric love, they were now about to give to Shelley in abundant measure, and thereafter to keep protective watch above his clover-clustered Roman grave.

The passage of the Alps was safely achieved, and the travellers reached Milan, April 4. Thence Shelley and Mary proceeded to the Lake of Como, but, disappointed by their continued failure to find a suitable abode, they returned to Milan, shortly gathered their little flock together, and pressed on to Pisa and Leghorn, not, however, before Claire had satisfied the demand Byron made from Venice that she

should relinquish to him the control of Allegra. At Leghorn they gladly met Mr. and Mrs. John Gisborne, the latter of whom, a bright, thoughtful woman, was an old friend of Godwin's, and the mother of Henry Reveley, Gisborne's stepson. After a few weeks in Leghorn, Shelley transferred his family to the Baths of Lucca, in the beautiful forest country north of Pisa. Here *Rosalind and Helen* was concluded, and here husband and wife spent memorable hours in the groves and vineyards, within sight of Apennine summits. This life of calm was broken by the growing anxiety of Claire, whom Shelley at length accompanied to Venice to see Byron and Allegra. Claire found her little daughter at the home of the Hoppners, the English consul-general's family, who received the wayfarers with great hospitality. Shelley alone visited Byron, who heard him with friendly regard, but with little real consideration. He stressed his liking for Shelley, however, and insisted that he bring his family and Claire to live for a time in Byron's then unoccupied villa — I Cappuccini — at Este, among the Euganean Hills. Shelley accepted the invitation, and wrote to Mary asking her to meet him in Este. Little Clara was taken ill on the road, and after anxious days in the new home, the parents hastened with her to Venice to consult there a noted *medico*, but had hardly arrived when the child died. A week passed sadly in Venice before they returned to Este to find Claire again, and William, and Allegra. Now for some time having brooded his masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley fell back upon present surroundings and recent memories, first producing *Julian and Maddalo*, and, in part at least, *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills*. The latter poem is of poignant and almost incredible lyric beauty; the former has been already touched. By October 12 the poet, with Mary and William, was back in Venice, seeing much of Byron, admiring his genius but despising his excesses. After a brief return to Este and the re-delivery of Allegra to Byron, the hospitable villa was deserted and the faces of the four were

set southward for Naples. Here, notwithstanding his hope of improvement, a deep dejection, both physical and spiritual, seized upon Shelley, an almost Hamlet-like sense of isolation, from which he did not well recover until the early spring. It was now resolved to visit Rome, where they had spent but a week *en route* to Naples, and the completion of their first year in Italy was signalized by the entrance of the pilgrims into the Eternal City. They found themselves now somewhat less lonely; acquaintances called; steady reading went on; and interested visits were paid to the Vatican, Villa Borghese, Pantheon, and Capitol. In the remote and solitary moments of his frequent walks about the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, Shelley almost completed his great lyrical drama, *Prometheus Unbound*, among at once the gentlest and proudest vindications of the human spirit. He felt his inevitable way to the symbolic heart of this noble myth, as imagined and made vital not only by Æschylus and others, but by the high instinct of man he had himself developed. Here Shelley's prime idea of the self-saving and self-justifying power of Love reaches its surest and most elevated expression.

A long reaction and an anticipation of evil to come led the poet to long again for at least a brief visit to England, "out of pure weakness of heart." The temperamental barometer proved true. On June 7 William, the most fondly cherished of the children, passed away. The English burying-ground, hard-by the Porta San Paolo, received the little body, and Shelley and Mary were left desolate indeed. The mother's melancholy, in truth, became so intense that Shelley decided upon Leghorn and Mrs. Gisborne as the place and person most suited to her at the moment, and rented, accordingly, the Villa Valsovano there. He himself had urged his doubtful steps through many a gloom, and felt for the thrice-bereaved mother no less than he felt with her. "We must all weep on these occasions," wrote Leigh Hunt to Mary. "and it is better for the kindly fountains within us that we

should. May you weep quietly, but not long; and may the calmest and most affectionate spirit that comes out of the contemplation of great things, and the love of all, lay his most blessed hand upon you." When Mary would be much alone Shelley read and thought as rapidly and as eagerly as ever, adventuring through Dante, Boccaccio, and Calderon, and praising the Spanish dramatist with discriminating enthusiasm. Now too, he finished his own deeply stirring drama, *The Cenci*, conceived more than a year before, after reading an old MS. at Leghorn, and viewing Guido's supposed portrait of Beatrice in the Colonna Palace at Rome. This production, touched as it is with weaknesses of phrasing and of dramatic "business," — the dramatist sometimes hinders the poet, — is yet comparable, as a study in the spirit of hate and villainy, only with Shakespeare's *Richard III* and Browning's *Guido*; while Cordelia, Pompilia, and Beatrice form the triad of great women in English poetry. The fifth act is by far the most powerful, not only because it contains the "tremendous end," but because Shelley raises here a high unfettered wing in soul-criticism and dramatic range.

In Florence, where the autumn of 1819 found them settled, Shelley spent many days visiting the great galleries of painting and statuary, though with increasing physical unrest. On November 12 a last child was born to him, christened Percy Florence, who survived both his father and mother, and inherited the baronetcy. The prevailing discontent in England, with which Shelley deeply sympathized, occasioned at this time the writing of his *Songs and Poems for the Men of England*, and his *Masque of Anarchy*, — poems of peaceful poise but revolutionary impulse, — and a thoughtful treatise, *A Philosophical View of Reform*. A translation of Euripides' *The Cyclops*, the creation of an additional act of the *Prometheus*, and the breathing of the subtly lyric incantation to the spirit of the West Wind, all belong to this great creative year. It is interesting to note the loyal

human interest Shelley took during this winter in his friend Reveley's projected steamship, an interest that did not hesitate to provide ill-to-be-spared money for the advancement of what was almost a foredoomed failure. The extreme cold of early January, 1820, drove him at length to Pisa, where most of his time was thenceforth to be spent. A small group of friends cheered Shelley and Mary here, during the few intervals not given over to study and composition, — friends not unwelcome, since the Gisbornes and Henry Reveley were now leaving for England. Though the poet's health was responding favourably to the change of climate, Godwin's monotonous embarrassments and demands preyed upon his spirits, and he was obliged to protect Mary from full knowledge of her father's rapacity. There were other sources of perplexity and even anger that greatly disturbed the Shelleys at this time, — a grossly unfair attack upon the poet in the *Quarterly Review*, and a scandal spread abroad by a vicious servant which it took some time to check and refute. With the advent of midsummer the heat grew so intense that a move was made to the proffered home of the absent Gisbornes, Casa Ricci, in Leghorn, where — following the Pisan lyric, *The Cloud* — the *Ode to a Skylark* was written. Probably the music of the Spenserian Alexandrines, for he had long loved the *Fuërie Queene*, rang in Shelley's ears as he penned this exulting yet regretful cry. Among the other poems of 1820 are the *Letter to Maria Gisborne*, *The Sensitive Plant*, *The Witch of Atlas*, *Hymn to Mercury*, *Ode to Liberty*, and *Ode to Naples*. By August the heat was unbearable, and another change was made to the Baths of San Giuliano di Pisa. Shelley's interest in European political conditions was acute, and he watched with keen solicitude the course of the revolutions in Spain and Naples, greatly regretting the eventual success of the Austrians in restoring the false Neapolitan king. During the early months of 1821 he sought and found social reinforcement of his views. The

Gisbornes were back, though a lively misunderstanding prevented an early renewal of old ties; and Thomas Medwin, the poet's cousin and former schoolmate, had found his not too welcome way to Pisa. Over against these was the finer intelligence and exalted spirit of the Greek patriot, Alexander Mavrocordato, to whom Shelley's prophetic drama, *Hellas*, was afterward dedicated; the finesse of Francesco Pacchiani, a Pisan academician; the good-natured rapidity of Count Taaffe; the skilful improvisations of the famous Sgricci; and the pathetic duration of the Contessina Emilia Viviani, beloved alike by Shelley, Mary, and Claire. Condemned, with her sister, to the strict seclusion of a convent life by a jealous stepmother and an indifferent father, Emilia was in evil case, and this, with her exquisite loveliness, so wrought upon Shelley's imagination that he sought continually to deliver 'er from the Intolerance he had so often scourged of old. He became her "*caro fratello*" and Mary her "dearest sister." The profound though passing influence exerted upon Shelley by her character and situation is apparent in his *Epipsychidion*. "It is," he wrote to Gisborne, after many months, "an idealized history of my life and feelings. I think one is always in love with something or other; the error — and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it — consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is, perhaps, eternal." The "isle under Ionian skies," an idea which had so strong a hold upon Shelley's fancy,¹ as upon the youthful Browning's,² here achieves its right poetic value. Emilia married at last a Signor Biondi, and lived but a brief and checkered life. It was fitting though almost acci-

¹ Cf. letter of August, 1821, to Mary: "My greatest content would be utterly to desert all human society. I would retire with you and our child to a solitary island in the sea and build a boat, and shut upon my retreat the floodgates of the world." Cf. also *Prometheus*, IV, iv, 200, 201.

² Cf. *Pippa Passes*, ii, 314-327.

dental that at this time Shelley should put into critical form his own noble theory of poetry, published after his death.

Soon after the departure of Claire, who was now engaged in tutoring certain young Florentines, there arrived in Pisa friends of Medwin, Lieutenant Edward Elliker Williams and his wife Jane. The Shelleys, both husband and wife, were much pleased with the newcomers, who in their turn attached themselves with sympathy and understanding to their fellow-exiles. With Williams and Reveley the poet would sail the Arno in a light Arthurian shallop that on one exciting occasion suddenly overset, nearly ending Shelley, the non-swimmer, then and there. Notwithstanding this mishap his love for nautical excursions grew into a passion, nearly every day found him on the water, and on May 4, he even undertook a venturesome excursion with Reveley from the mouth of the Arno to Leghorn. In San Giuliano the case was not different, and it was here, indeed, that *The Boat on the Serchio* was born. Here also was produced the last of Shelley's completed major poems, *Adonais*, written in memory of John Keats.

Upon hearing of Keats's illness and of his arrival in Italy, Shelley had urged him to accept the invitation to Pisa he had previously extended, but poor Keats was already struggling with death, and yielded himself at Rome, February 23, 1821. Shelley received the news some weeks later, probably in a letter from England, and began almost immediately to brood his elegy. He had not known Keats well, had variously estimated his work, and had scarcely sympathized with his consuming passion for his art. Indeed, he had written Keats an earnest word concerning his own freedom from "system and mannerism," instancing the *Prometheus* and *The Cenci*. Over-regularity he had sought to avoid. "I wish those who excel me in genius would pursue the same plan." And Keats had good-humouredly replied: "An artist must serve Mammon; he must have 'self-concentration' — selfishness, perhaps. You, I am sure, will for-

give me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity, and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore." Shelley did not much admire *Endymion*, but he thought *Hyperion* "grand poetry," the product of "transcendent genius." He sincerely respected Keats, though he failed to understand him, and it is matter for large regret that the two poets, because of the sensitiveness of the one and the too lately aroused concern of the other, did not find a closer union — a communion — possible. The poem itself, written in Spenserians, is as a pure elegy unequalled in our language. It sounds the deeps of death, for Keats, for Shelley, for all "the inheritors of unfulfilled renown." It was first printed at Pisa, with the types of Didot. "I am especially curious," wrote Shelley to his English publisher, Ollier, "to hear the fate of *Adonais*. I confess I should be surprised if *that* poem were born to an immortality of oblivion."

After a flying visit to Florence, house-hunting on behalf of Horace Smith, who was defending him against calumnies consequent upon the pirated republication of *Queen Mab*, and who failed, eventually, to reach Italy, Shelley journeyed to Ravenna early in August, 1821, to become the guest of Byron at the Guiccioli Palace. He found his fellow-poet less extravagant than before in conduct, if not in criticism of all things. Had he known of Byron's perfidy in failing to suppress — indeed actually using — reports against Shelley's honour, — a perfidy completed when he engaged yet failed to deliver to Mrs. Hoppner an important letter written to her by Mary, — it is doubtful whether he would have consented to meet Byron again. As it was, he found life in Ravenna none too pleasant, and though he was captivated with the fifth canto of *Don Juan*, as Byron read it, and felt his own inability to rival the facility of such art, yet both Byron's personality and his very genius oppressed Shelley, and he left Ravenna for Pisa August 17. Before long, however, Byron and his companion had decided to

come also to Pisa, taking the Lanfranchi Palace on the Lung' Arno. Byron had suggested to Shelley at Ravenna that they and Leigh Hunt should unite in founding a periodical, to contain representative future work from each of them. Shelley now took up the plan with enthusiasm, so far at least as it concerned Hunt, and, learning of his friend's serious illness in England, wrote proposing his departure for Italy. Hunt reached Leghorn early in July, 1822, but the affectionate welcome with which Shelley greeted him was to be both the beginning and the end of the renewed comradeship for which each was hungering.

But a few miles up the coast from Pisa lies the Gulf of Spezia, whither Shelley and Mary, with Claire, who had rejoined them, travelled in September, 1821, seeking a nest for time to come. They explored the enchanting shores with delight, and returned happy in the assurance that they had found their summer haven for the succeeding year. Shortly afterward they left the Baths, and re-established themselves in Pisa proper, at the Tre Palazzi di Chiesa, opposite the Lanfranchi Palace and Byron, inviting the Williams family to occupy the lower floor. The Shelleys — free for the moment from the cares of authorship, now that *Hellas* and Mary's *Valperga* were concluded — read freely, discussed high matters with Byron and the Williamses, or beguiled the time with Medwin and Taaffe. Shelley himself walked and rode and sailed not a little, or Byron would mischievously invite him to a formal dinner, for the sake of watching his unease, or would read his *Cain* to a hearer even more appreciative, perhaps, than its creator. Byron placed great value upon Shelley's critical opinions, asserting that "he, alone, in this age of humbug, dares stem the current, as he did to-day the flooded Arno in his skiff, although I could not observe he made any progress." These words are quoted from the original *Recollections* of Edward John Trelawny, a Cornishman, and friend of Medwin and Williams, who, though still young, had led a wild and varied career. He

arrived in Pisa, at Williams's instance, January 14, 1822, hoping to secure Williams and other recruits for a summer cruise on the Mediterranean. He was a man of fine physique, dark, tall, and strong, "a kind of half-Arab Englishman," as Mary described him, whose frank manner and adventurous disposition soon won him the regard of the little colony on the Lung' Arno. His *Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author* are, though somewhat inaccurate, peculiarly interesting and readable. Shelley found him a valorous figure, a ready-to-hand symbol of knight-errantry, and drew a poetic picture of him in *Fragments of an Unfinished Drama*. Williams and Shelley, with Byron's party, soon formed a league with Trelawny for the ensuing descent upon Spezia, and he was commissioned to order a little schooner from Captain Daniel Roberts, an old friend then staying at Genoa. Early in February Shelley and Williams left for Spezia to secure houses, but returned to announce that only one good residence was to be had, and that this was "to serve for all." The "all," however, became limited by Byron's defection. During the softly beautiful days of the Tuscan spring Shelley wrote his three lyrics to Jane Williams, originally intended only for the private reading of her husband and herself. He was also at work on the fragmentary drama, *Charles the First*.

It was fortunate for the Shelleys that Byron decided against going to Spezia. Not Byron's posing humours, to which Shelley was accustomed, but his steady cruelty toward Claire, despite all intervention, slowly wore out Shelley's friendship, and it was therefore with relief on all grounds that he accepted Byron's decision. Claire's anxiety for Allegra, who soon thereafter died in an unhealthy convent, caused her such suffering that Shelley and Mary resolved to take her with them. On April 26 Trelawny escorted Mary and Claire to Spezia, followed the next day by Shelley and the Williamses. By May 1 the party were settled in Casa Magni, a picturesque but not too comfortable villa on the

Bay of Lerici, near the fishing-hamlet of San Terenzo. Claire, apprised at length of Allegra's death, returned for a time to Florence, and Trelawny proceeded to Genoa, there to lend a hand in Captain Roberts's boat-building. This now included not only Shelley's craft, but a yacht, the Bolivar, for Byron.

On May 12 the long-expected boat arrived, built from the somewhat eccentric plans of Williams, but so swift and graceful that Ariel became her name of right, rather than Don Juan, as Trelawny had named her during the original partnership. Charles Vivian, a young sailor-lad, one of the crew who brought her, was retained, and made a quietly efficient helper to the too pleased and energetic Williams and the book-preoccupied Shelley, who, delegated to steer, used oftener than not to put the helm the wrong way. Trelawny and Roberts touched at Spezia, June 13, with Byron's yacht, and Trelawny went on to Leghorn three days later. Whether on land or sea, Shelley was almost constantly reading or musing, though at times his mood was as quick and merry as a child's at play. *The Triumph of Life*, begun at Pisa, and continued at Casa Magni, is the last fine fragment of his poetic work. The poem is touched with a deeper and truer philosophy than of old, the fruit of maturing experience, and leads us to feel that, if time had been his, he would have become at once more human and more catholic, less impatient for the renovation of life, more penetrating in its interpretation.

In many of Shelley's most haunting songs there is heard the echoing whisper of early death. Never of a really robust constitution, and subject during his last years to spasms of acute pain, he insensibly allowed his youthfully pensive anticipations to take on a more settled habit. When boating with Byron during the summer of 1816 and threatened with accidental death, he felt in the prospect, he wrote to Peacock, "a mixture of sensations, among which terror entered, though but subordinately." Trelawny tells us that Shelley remained

inert at the bottom of a deep pool in the Arno during the progress of the only swimming lesson he seems to have taken, and had to be hastily rescued. "When he recovered his breath, he said: 'I always find the bottom of the well, and they say Truth lies there. In another minute I should have found it, and you would have found an empty shell.'" And at Casa Magni, oaring the boat one day into deep water, with Jane Williams and her babes as passengers, he sat silent a while, at last looking up and exclaiming: "Now let us together solve the great mystery!" Williams writes of what, perhaps, was the strangest portent of all, the vision that came to Shelley in May of a child like Allegra rising from the sea, to smile at him and clap her hands in joy.

Early in June Claire returned to Casa Magni, and assisted in nursing Mary, who became for a week or more seriously ill. Though attended by Shelley with unrelaxing devotion, she improved but slowly. By July Hunt's announced departure from Genoa for Leghorn determined Shelley and Williams to sail for the same port, that they might there welcome him to Italy, and see his family safely housed in the lower floor of the Lanfranchi Palace at Pisa. With vague fears Mary saw her husband embark, and "cried bitterly when he went away."¹ The voyage was pleasant and speedy, but disappointment awaited the voyagers. Although Hunt had arrived and was greeted with affectionate warmth, Byron, as it happened, was sulking at a slight put upon him by the Italian authorities, and was resolved to quit the literary enterprise and the country at once. It was imperative that Shelley should appeal to Byron on behalf of Hunt's necessity and good faith, which he did with so much force and reason that a satisfactory programme was at last arranged. By July 7 all was settled, and the poet, turning to Mrs. Hunt, as the three friends strolled about Pisa, exclaimed: "If I die to-morrow, I have lived to be older than my father; I am ninety years of age."

¹ From a letter to Mrs. Gisborne.

Prophetic words! Farewells were exchanged, Hunt put into Shelley's hands a copy of Keats's last volume, and the evening shadows of the Leghorn road swallowed up the form of his friend. On the morrow, July 8, 1822, both the port authorities and the friends of Williams and Shelley at Leghorn were disturbed by signs of tempest. Captain Roberts, in particular, sought to detain them for another day. But dissuasion was of no avail. Both were anxious to return to Casa Magni, and shortly after noon, with the lad Vivian, they set sail, watched anxiously by the glasses of Roberts and Trelawny. A few hours later a thunderstorm broke in earnest, the several smaller craft scurrying before it into harbour. Trelawny was stationed on board the anchored Bolivar, whence he did not retire until dark. Roberts saw the last of the Ariel from the lighthouse tower. It was a speck some miles out at sea, but his glass descried the occupants taking in the topsail.

Not for several days did the sea relinquish its dead, casting up Shelley's body near Via Reggio, and Williams's about three miles distant, in Tuscan territory. The end had come, and Shelley's life of light and song, —

“ . . . its pinions disarrayed of might,
Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far away
Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
As waves which lately paved his watery way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.”

Some weeks passed before Vivian's body was found.

The anxiety of the women at Casa Magni soon deepened into alarm, and, on the Friday following the fatal Monday, drove them into Pisa. They saw Byron first, and then Roberts and Trelawny at Leghorn. None could comfort them. After anguished conversations they were persuaded to return to Lerici, accompanied by Trelawny. The bodies, much mutilated, were found July 17 and 18. In one of Shelley's pockets was a volume of Sophocles, in the other the borrowed copy of Keats, turned back at *The Eve of St.*

Agnes. The stringency of the Italian quarantine law made it necessary to secure permission to cremate the bodies — already officially buried in quicklime on the shore — in order to preserve the ashes for later interment. On August 15, Trelawny, Hunt, and Byron gathered on the beach; the funeral pyre for Williams's body was made ready, and was lit by Trelawny. "The materials being dry and resinous the pine-wood burnt furiously, and drove us back. It was hot enough before, there was no breath of air, and the loose sand scorched our feet. As soon as the flames became clear, and allowed us to approach, we threw frankincense and salt into the furnace, and poured a flask of wine and oil over the body. The Greek oration was omitted, for we had lost our Hellenic bard." The next day, at Via Reggio, Shelley's remains were similarly treated, before a group of curious native spectators. The story is realistically told by Trelawny. "What surprised us all," he concludes, "was that the heart remained entire. In watching this relic from the fiery furnace, my hand was severely burnt; and had any one seen me do the act I should have been put into quarantine."

The final burial of the poet's ashes took place, by Mary's desire, in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, in a tomb built by Trelawny within a recess of the old Roman wall. This was covered with solid stone, bearing an inscription in Latin written by Leigh Hunt, with a passage added by Trelawny from *The Tempest*, well loved by Shelley: —

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

COR CORDIUM

NATUS IV AUG. MDCCXCII

OBIIT VIII JUL. MDCCCXXII

"Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange."

In the companion tomb lies Trelawny, whose grave is inscribed with Shelley's lines, *The Epitaph*. Not far away

are the graves of John Keats and Joseph Severn, and that of John Addington Symonds, lover and biographer of Shelley. 'And all about grow every sorte of flowre,' — violets and daisies, roses and clover, and over all the tall, dark cypresses wave solemn boughs.

SHELLEY AS POET¹

There is nothing more difficult to define than Poetry, because there is nothing more Protean. The statements are as various as the creators and the critics, and it is well that it is so, for particularity and insistent dicta are foreign to the spirit of literature. Literature is large and catholic; it is in its essence a mystery, incapable of precise scientific analysis; it is an unquenchable spiritual impulse and adventure realized in words; it is the interpretation of the dream of life; and with its instinct humanity is inalienably endowed. "You cannot escape Literature," declared Sidney Lanier. "For how can you think yourself out of thought? How can you run away from your own feet?"

Yet there are at least three qualities that may seem to determine the literary artist, the poet. He must, first, seek pure truth with a devoted and single-minded enthusiasm, whatever the cost. He must cherish every hint, every gleam. He must catch the rhythms of the noisy life about him as those of the sea and the forest. He must be at heart a man of intense social sympathy, yet of a lonely habit. Certainly, he will belong the more truly to the world of men because he does not belong to them. He must be for mankind —

'The only speaker of essential truth,
Opposed to relative, comparative
And temporal truths.'

"Poets," said Shelley, "are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." And again, "A poem is the very image of life

¹ The attempt has been made to touch the biographical sketch with criticism. The present treatment aims to derive general critical principles from the particulars already given.

expressed in its eternal truth." The place of the poet is high but hard. It is his, above others, to experience with fortitude "the baptism in salt water," to suffer nobly in life and even at times in art for his power's sake. If slowly and with struggle, yet he still spells out his word. Shelley's solitary figure of Alastor was not, we must think, unhappy, though his ear was holden to hear "the eternal note of sadness."

The poet must have, also, fine sensibility to the beauty that lurks in language. This is the plastic material with which he works, — positively, in words; negatively, in silences. His diction must be sure, representing life and representing him. He must be keenly aware of the dignity of words, their music, colours, individualities, and kinships. His poems must not be word-prisons, but word-homes. And to this regard for words — indeed, as conditioning and justifying such regard — he must, last, add an impelling insight into the root rightness of things. Art, with its hunger for truth and its passion for beauty, feeds also and always upon good, upon the law of love and virtue. A fine-grained æsthete must the artist be; but he must be, before and beyond that, a man. One in any field who delights to picture the unholy for its own sake, who is preoccupied rather with the temporary alliance of energy and evil than with the struggle that makes for character — such an one is not less dead to beauty than to good. It is quite true that the professed moralizer has no place in pure literature, for he is a briefholder, a special pleader, and does not see and show impartially. "A poet would do ill," thought Shelley, "to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither." Yet it is also true that life is seen by the poet as a unit, and that art, like life, is of moral significance. Every great artist is implicitly devoted to the idea of good, is sincerely on the better side. All sure literary masterpieces are marked by unmistakable signs of love for

that which is holy, whatever plot or method may appear. No genius, however erratic, therefore, has been radically vicious. Though the light he lives in may sometimes blind him, it will not blast him. Extraordinary sincerity is demanded in art, whole-hearted allegiance to one's ideal and inspiration, and lifelong perseverance in the attempt to realize these. "Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man."

Notwithstanding the varying emphases of the great poets, — variations often more apparent than real, — it will be found that their lives and their works satisfy these conditions. It is easy to distinguish Shelley's poetry from Wordsworth's, or from Shakespeare's, and yet it would sometimes be a good deal less easy were it not for the single fact of style. — the characteristic clothing, or rather the special way in which each man's work wears its clothing. Even so, there are brief passages in *Alastor* that Wordsworth might have uttered, and lyric touches in the *Prometheus* that would not readily be wrested as spurious from one of Shakespeare's romantic comedies. The truth is, that Poetry, too, is one, and that, as Shelley himself so finely phrases it, "poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. . . . A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind

is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape." ¹

Shelley, for his part, saturated himself as a youth in the plays of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and other Elizabethans; in the *Faerie Queene* of Spenser (whose influence on succeeding English poets, particularly Milton and Keats, has justly won for him the title of "the poets' poet"); in Homer and the Greek tragedies; in Theocritus, Moschus, and Bion; in Horace, Ovid, Virgil, and Lucretius; in Tasso, Ariosto, and lesser Italians; in Milton's austere epic and his minor works; and in the poems of Scott, Moore, Southey, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. Goethe, too, he read. In later years he praised much Calderon and Dante, and read Byron with the added interest their frequent contact aroused. This is but a partial catalogue of the poetry he eagerly absorbed — the prose was correspondingly considerable — and which more and more discovered to him his powers and opportunities, as his own works did for Browning in a later day. He was stirred and moved, also, by the great Biblical poems and dramas, — the book of Job especially.

The living persons who most influenced Shelley have been already mentioned and described in the sketch of his life, and there also it was shown how deeply his imagination was affected by the elemental forces of nature. Forces, — because, Titanic or delicate as the object might be, Mont Blanc or a skylark, Shelley seems chiefly concerned with its *incense*, the spirit that gives it being and direction. He sees nature neither as vast painted scenery against which as against a background man plays his part, nor yet as the

¹ From the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*.

unreal projection of human thought and fancy. Responsive as he is to every sensuous impression, and eager to trace the course of human destiny in the symbolic aspects of nature, he yet characteristically regards all natural phenomena as vital in themselves and for themselves, understanding man no less than understood by him, honouring their own dignity as members of the spiritual economy of the universe, and calmer and truer in their movement toward destiny than the mortals who live among them in alternating fits of love and cruelty, of fear and hope. Into their spiritual brotherhood the illuminated may gain access, but only on terms of purity and unselfishness. What they reveal to such is revealed for the large sake of all, not for the little, local gain of a wandering human. Nature and man are tending toward the high estate of perfect love, and each will be the better for the other's understanding friendship. Prometheus, the ideal of Man, and Asia, transfigured Nature, will at length become united in one being, that Light of which the poet sings in *Adonais* —

“ . . . whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which, through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst.”

It will thus be seen that Shelley is at one with the romantic temper of his age in ascribing to nature a spiritual quality and significance, and in regarding man's life as symbolic and progressive; but he goes beyond Romanticism — Wordsworthian Romanticism at least — in his idea of the vigorously dynamic life of nature, an idea he holds in common with modern physicists, save that with him nature is almost everywhere apotheosized. Wordsworth, though he informed nature with intense spiritual meaning, yet saw it in familiar images and in rather still habitudes. Even at its highest,

nature in his work is somewhat domesticized, at least localized, in tinge, and is often comparatively hushed and stationary. Where it moves and energizes it does so slowly, and within limits. In itself, its tone is the tone of the phenomenal tenanted in time by the Eternal rather than that of a rushing mighty wind. To Wordsworth nature is the garment of the Eternal; to Shelley, its movement. Shelley makes his pictures less pictures than actional prophecies. Arethusa leaps down the rocks, the Night swiftly walks over the western wave, the skylark pants forth a flood of rapture, the West Wind is a wild spirit moving everywhere, and "Follow! Follow!" cry the echoing Voices to Panthea and Asia in the *Prometheus*. The very mythological largeness of many of his nature-conceptions — Greek in body but intensely modern and fervent in spirit — gives them a power that stirs and draws even usually unemotional readers. His poetry illustrates one of his own cardinal doctrines as critic, it "compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know."

For Shelley is nearly always a coursing poet. There is sun in his work, and wind and storm. An "enemy of society," he was yet an anxious lover and reformer of mankind. Against occasional laws he rebelled, considering only the laws of the spirit to be binding and immutable. He was always a Platonist in temper, and early became one also by conviction. All that man needs, he thought, is freedom to think and to act. Granted relief from fear and tyranny, he cannot fail to come out into the light of love. His instinct will lead him if he will but trust it, for it is not blind, but is made purposeful by the Power, the Spirit, that helps all things finally to realize themselves in love. Man has been shamefully abused, drugged, made mad, by oppression, selfishness, and dread. Let him become himself —

"Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;

Familiar acts are beautiful through love ;
 Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
 Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be !

" His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
 And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
 A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
 Is as a tempest-wingéd ship, whose helm
 Love rules through waves which dare not overwhelm,
 Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

" The lightning is his slave ; heaven's utmost deep
 Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
 They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on !
 The tempest is his steed, he strides the air ;
 And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare :
 ' Heaven, hast thou secrets ? Man unveils me ; I have none.' "

In order to clear man's way for him Shelley discovers not only his internal foes, but also the external enemies which encourage these. — King and Priest. Against political and ecclesiastical tyrants he lifts up a burning voice, in his *Ode to Liberty*, *Revolt of Islam*, *Prometheus*, and *The Cenci*. Here he is at one with the most ardent spirits of the modern revolutionary era, though in point of patience¹ he had much to learn. It seemed to Shelley that personal prosperity and content meant nearly always a selfish blindness to the woes of others : it seemed to him that the world at large was in the grip of baneful and intolerable custom ; that men were smugly and fatuously wearing shackles that not only hampered their movements but corroded their very souls ; and that all that was necessary to their deliverance was acceptance of the spirit of love in place of the dictates of

¹ In matters intimately affecting himself, however, Shelley sometimes showed extraordinary long-suffering. Note the mildness of the following rebuke in a letter to James Ollier, his publisher : " Mr. Gisborne has sent me a copy of the *Prometheus*, which is certainly most beautifully printed. It is to be regretted that the errors of the press are so numerous, and in many respects so destructive of the sense of a species of poetry which, I fear, even without this disadvantage, very few will understand or like."

[what they called law,¹ a willingness to see and assume mankind's heritage of freedom of soul, and a determination no longer to submit to the whims and wilfulnesses of self-constituted exploiters. In brief, Shelley was a thorough-going Radical in thought, in teaching, and in deed, though a many-sided one. He was wholesomely earnest in his desire for the world's betterment, yet he was, in his personal relations, sometimes strangely insensitive in his very sensitiveness. He was hardly willing that men should encounter and overthrow tyranny with its own weapons, and yet he was deeply impatient of their long hesitation to be free. If Wordsworth was a priest of Liberty, and Byron its soldier, Shelley rather was its young prophet, who brooded, and promised, and exhorted, and lamented, in turn.

Too often his poetry struck the note of grief at the listlessness and insufficiency of human life. It is interesting to note with what unrest he time after time contrasts life with death, the waking consciousness with sleep. Indeed, there are few of the romantic poets who are not moved to noble utterance on these twin themes. In Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Byron, such references recur again and again. For the sleep-experience, it seems to the poet, provides for him a way of escape from the weaknesses and wrongs of mortality, rescues him from his own and his fellows' littleness, gives his imagination the right and the power to assert its mastery and go on its unchecked adventure. So, too, as in sleep he dies to the world of fact, from sleep he rises with enlarged horizon, with cleared and refreshed spirit.

"Every morning we are born: every night we die."

¹ In his *Essay on Christianity*, Shelley writes: "This, and no other, is justice: — to consider, under all the circumstances of a particular case, how the greatest quantity and purest quality of happiness will ensue from any action; [this] is to be just, and there is no other justice. The distinction between justice and mercy was first imagined in the courts of tyranny. Mankind receive every relaxation of their tyranny as a circumstance of grace or favour."

If sleep can so serve him, how, he asks himself, shall not death also serve him, only more greatly? For death, it seems, must gather into itself all the meanings and benedictions of sleep. Shelley touches these ideas with a more delicate and lingering sympathy than does any other. We find their rising and falling music in *Queen Mab*, the opening chorus in *Hellas*, *Mutability*, *To Night*, *Adonais*, *Stanzas written in Dejection*, and in these lettered words concerning the English burying-place at Rome: "To see the sun shining on its bright grass, fresh, when we first visited it, with the autumnal dews, and hear the whispering of the wind among the leaves of the trees which have overgrown the tomb of Cestius, and the soil which is stirring in the sun-warm earth, and to mark the tombs, mostly of women and young people, who were buried there, one might, if one were to die, desire the sleep they seem to sleep. Such is the human mind, and so it peoples with its wishes vacancy and oblivion." The figures under which Shelley broods upon the thoughts of sleep and death are among the gentlest and truest in the whole range of his shining imagery.

A rising and falling music, it was said, — tinged often with melancholy. But this melancholy is not to be confounded with pessimism. It is the melancholy of art and artists, a principle that has persisted in Teutonic literatures especially, from the time of the Saxon sagas to our own day. Its roots, perhaps, are three: recognition of the incompleteness of human life; inability to express a thought or truth with the sheer first power of that thought or truth; and failure to secure more than a very slight share of the responsive sympathy of men and women. The poet is baffled at every turn by these "Thus far's," — even though he fight the better for them, — the limitation of life, the limitation of language, the limitation of love. Shelley felt them all acutely. Himself hindered by himself, he looked forward the more eagerly to the emancipation of mankind: in his later days deeply doubtful — save in brief moments —

of the poetic power he yet felt constrained to exert; hungry always for words and looks of understanding; he has left us his testimony touching each of these common sorrows of the imperfectness of life he wrote: —

Adonais "Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. — Die
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!"

Of the struggle for expression: —

"Woe is me!
The wingéd words on which my soul would pierce
Into the height of love's rare Universe
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire."

And again: "The most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet." And of the inadequacy of human love: —

"O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home and your bier?"

Shelley's own thought of himself as poet and reformer is set forth in the following extract from a letter of December 11, 1817, to Godwin, concerning *Laon and Cythna*, or *The Revolt of Islam*: "I felt that it was in many respects a genuine picture of my own mind. I felt that the sentiments were true, not assumed. And in this have I long believed that my power consists — in sympathy, and that part of the imagination which relates to sympathy and contemplation. I am formed, if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole. Of course I

believe these faculties, which perhaps comprehend all that is sublime in man, to exist very imperfectly in my own mind. . . . I cannot but be conscious, in much of what I write, of an absence of that tranquillity which is the attribute and accompaniment of power. . . . If I live, or if I see any trust in coming years, doubt not that I shall do something, whatever it may be, which a serious and earnest estimate of my powers will suggest to me, and which will be in every respect accommodated to their utmost limits." Godwin need not have doubted, for Shelley was not born to pass away until he had uttered his masterpiece, — both a revelation and a prophecy. *Alastor*, too, *Julian and Maddalo*, and *Adonais*, have peculiar value as presenting self-delineations of the poet's mind, while in the exquisite song of the Fourth Spirit in the *Prometheus* we get something of the instinct and joy of the creative faculty that upbore him in those great moments for which he paid in the pain and sorrow of gray intervals: —

"On a poet's lips I slept
 Dreaming like a love-adept
 In the sound his breathing kept;
 Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
 But feeds on the aerial kisses
 Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
 He will watch from dawn to gloom
 The lake-reflected sun illumine
 The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
 Nor heed nor see what things they be;
 But from these create he can
 Forms more real than living man,
 Nurslings of immortality."

It remains to speak of Shelley's distinctive style, which is, of course, one always in point of word-lore, musical keenness, vivified sensibility, *acceleration*, yet it is separable into the lyric manner, the dramatic, the satiric, and the polemic. In the lyric Shelley is most surely himself, striking though to the secret of his feeling with quick penetra-

tion, and singing out his emotion exultantly, as in *The Cloud*; or mournfully, as in *Stanzas written in Dejection*; or both, as in *Epipsychidion*; yet in all with an astonishing anticipativeness. It is a singing at its happiest like the shrill delight of his own skylark, or the careless rapture of Browning's thrush, bird-like in both its trilling echoes and its swift-flung *ritornelles*; in its quiet caressing of a single note, as "dædal" or "multitudinous," and in the flooding harmonies of its finale. And here it should be said that Shelley's endings are among his greatest poetic victories over the clogs of expression, whether in the lyric-built drama, *Prometheus*, with which he could not rest content until he had added a fourth act of hope and gladness; or in the magnificently sustained pæan of Eternity with which *Adonais* breaks off its music; or in the lingering promise-refrains of the *Ode to the West Wind* and the apostrophes to Jane. Yet this is not true of all of his work, some of which, in its sheer lyric abandon, is over-careless of the oracle that "truth in art is the unity of a thing with itself." In the sonnet form, particularly, Shelley is less successful, possibly because his repugnance to even a literary law that did not immediately commend itself to his art sense may have disturbed his pen's ease and power. Certainly, he was careless here of the canons, and seems to have had scant appreciation of the self-justifying genius of this difficult but finely subtle form. Even so, one cannot but be grateful that Shelley needed no salvation from the vice of fastidiousness. It is possible to fail in art, as Browning writes, "only to succeed in highest art."

Something of the same unease in technique appears in the dramas, *Hellas*, *Prometheus*, and *The Cenci*, of which only the last-named is, in the traditional sense, a contribution to drama proper. I have used of the *Prometheus* the term "lyric-built," for Shelley's utterance is always essentially lyrical, and so indeed is his point of view. By this is meant that he is chiefly interested in reproducing

his own emotions in song, — emotions touching past deaths and persecutions, present pleasures and sorrows, and ideal aspirations toward a World-Cause he too often felt as silent and remote. He wrote — in its highest sense — personal poetry. His characteristic work is never horizontal: when exultant it shoots upward; when dejected it plunges downward. It has no merely craftsmanlike propriety. Of the *craft* of the dramatist, indeed, he knew little either by experience or by reflection, though his critical vision showed him the meaning of the dramatic *idea* so plainly that his statement of it in the preface to *The Cenci* is among the best we have. “The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama,” he writes, “is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant, and kind.” And again: “In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is true that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness.” *The Cenci* itself, though an actable play by virtue of its many sharply striking and challenging antitheses between the incarnated spirits of good and evil, its fidelity to tragic “pity and terror,” and its general conformity to the prime structural conditions of drama, is yet rather modern than critically orthodox in its literary tendencies. The last act, it is true, equals in nobility of diction the nobility of its passion; emphasizes the art value of reserve; is finely selective; and not once, it seems, falls into the tiresome mire of Common-place, a success only partially achieved in the acts preceding.

In these, powerful as they are, Shelley strangely strikes a few notes of undeniable flatness, his novitiate in drama, perhaps, in the less inspirational moments, intimidating him. The play as a whole tends, like *Hellas* and the *Prometheus*, toward closet drama. Though *The Cenci* is more immediately forceful than Browning's plays in general, yet the *Prometheus* is even farther away from the stage and stagecraft than Hardy's *Dynasts*, one of the most extreme instances in modern English drama of the closet play. In any case, the direction of the dramatic spirit of to-day is toward mind-enactment. We are beginning to suspect play-house plausibility, and to feel that personal Forests of Arden are better for us than any staged presentation can possibly be. The normal man, no doubt, even in a cultured community, will find in a carefully staged performance value for both his conscience and his fancy; yet, as the progress of the race is steadily away from the objective to the subjective (precisely as Shakespeare's progress was from the frankly concrete figures of the early comedies to *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*, neither of which plays can achieve on the stage a success commensurate with its spiritual power), it is natural that closet drama is becoming more and more persistent, and that we should have come to feel as well as to admit that the theatre is only an incident — however important — in the development of the drama, and that a play is not great first of all because it isactable. Shelley, for his part, felt this very keenly. "With the exception of *Fazio*,"¹ wrote Peacock, "I do not remember his having been pleased with any performance at an English theatre." In his *Defence of Poetry* he discusses at some length the history of the dramatic idea and the weakness of the modern stage. His own plays, given their appropriate background, will not fail of their social and spiritual appeal.

Of his satiric and polemic verse but little need be said. Though keen and animated, it does not convince, because

¹ By Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868).

neither Shelley's human experience nor his theory of life was quite extensive and catholic enough to enable him easily to see humour in folly, or love in hate. When he derides we do not feel that he is quite true to himself, and when he argues in verse we would rather hear him "tell." He would have produced less of this sort of work had he come more fully into the spirit of his follower Browning, as expressed in Paracelsus' dying words:—

"In my own heart love had not been made wise
To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
To know even hate is but a mask of love's,
To see a good in evil, and a hope
In ill-success; to sympathize, be proud
Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts;
All with a touch of nobleness, despite
Their error, upward tending all though weak,
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him."

Shelley's theory of evil, admirably hopeful though it is, seeks to abolish its reality rather than to impress that reality into the service of good. He caught foregleam visions of Paracelsus' final truth,¹ but visions not long enough or intense enough to hearten his thought of life into a steadier and saner regard. *Swellfoot the Tyrant* is not a poem that adds to Shelley's fame, and even in the youthful and not ineffective *Queen Mab* the poet in him is uneasily constrained to precipitate the worser part of the man's human ire into footnotes. When he foregoes the ungrateful business of denunciation, and begins to sound the high and pure notes of the race and time to be, it is then that both he and his readers most surely find their way.

Shelley stumbled sometimes in his physical gait, yet his habitual movement was a quick floating or gliding. It is

¹ See *Prometheus*, I, 303-305; III, iv, 381-383.

so in his life and his poetry. Where he stumbles and is checked, he recovers for a longer adventure. A man of penetrative intention and restless imagining, less anxious to lead than to love, he reveals himself in spirit-winged words as one of the most intimate and powerful among the stimulators of the soul, the builders of "that great poem," to use his own words, "which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world."

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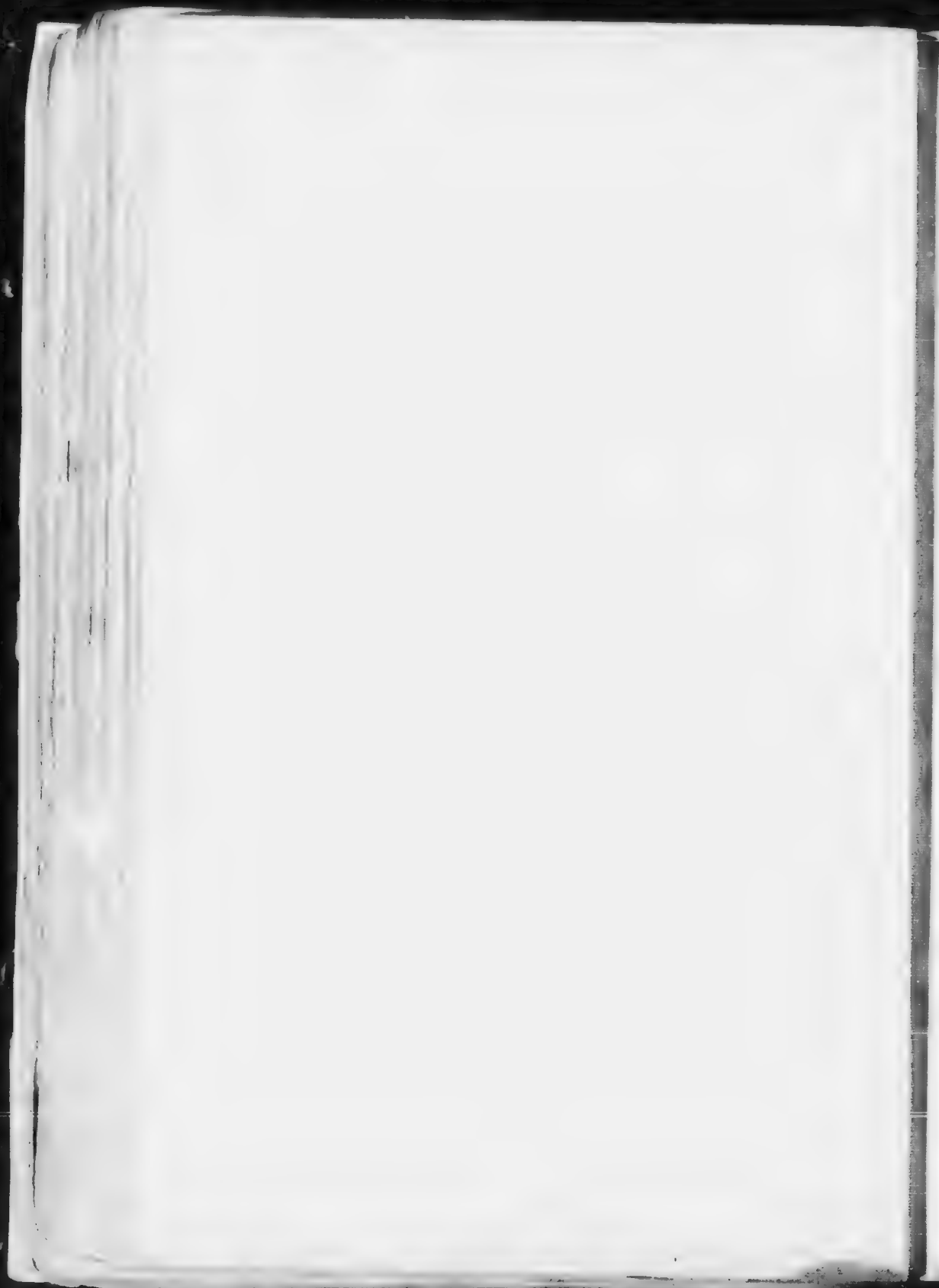
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POEMS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

STANZAS — APRIL, 1814

AWAY ! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of even :
Away ! the gathering winds will call the darkness
soon,
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights
of heaven.
Pause not ! the time is past ! Every voice cries,
Away ! 5
Tempt not with one last tear thy friend's ungentle
mood :
Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat
thy stay :
Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away ! to thy sad and silent home ;
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth ; 10
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and
come.
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.
The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around
thine head,
The blooms of dewy Spring shall gleam beneath
thy feet :
But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that
binds the dead, 15
Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou
and peace, may meet.

The cloud-shadows of midnight possess their own
 repose,
 For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in
 the deep.
 Some rest its turbulence unresting ocean
 knows
 Whatever mists, or toils, or grieves, hath its ap-
 pointed sleep. 20
 Thou in the grave shalt rest — yet, till the phantoms
 flee
 Which that house and heath and garden made dear
 to thee erewhile,
 Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings,
 are not free
 From the music of two voices, and the light of one
 sweet smile.

TO COLERIDGE

ΔΑΚΡΥΣΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ

O, there are spirits in the air,
 And genii of the evening breeze,
 And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
 As starbeams among twilight trees : —
 Such lovely ministers to meet 5
 Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,
 And moonlight seas, that are the voice
 Of these inexplicable things,
 Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice 10
 When they did answer thee ; but they
 Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes
 Beams that were never meant for thine,
 Another's wealth; — tame sacrifice 15
 To a fond faith! Still dost thou pine?
 Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,
 Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands?

Ah! wherefore didst thou build thine hope
 On the false earth's inconstancy? 20
 Did thine own mind afford no scope
 Of love, or moving thoughts to thee?
 That natural scenes or human smiles
 Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles.

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled 25
 Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted;
 The glory of the moon is dead;
 Night's ghosts and dreams have now departed:
 Thine own soul still is true to thee,
 But changed to a foul fiend through misery. 30

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever
 Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,
 Dream not to chase; — the mad endeavour
 Would scourge thee to severer pangs.
 Be as thou art. Thy settled fate, 35
 Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

1815.

TO WORDSWORTH

POET of Nature, thou hast wept to know
 That things depart which never may return;
 Childhood and youth, friendship, and love's first glow,
 Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.

4 *A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD*

These common woes I feel. One loss is mine, 5
 Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore :
 Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
 On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar :
 Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
 Above the blind and battling multitude 10
 In honoured poverty thy voice did we:
 Songs consecrate to truth and liberty, —
 Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
 Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.
 1815.

A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD

LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

THE wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
 Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray ;
 And pallid evening twines its beaming hair
 In duskier braids around the languid eyes of day.
 Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men, 5
 Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,
 Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea ;
 Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,
 Responding to the charm with its own mystery. 10
 The winds are still, or the dry church tower grass
 Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, ærial Pile, whose pinnacles
 Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
 Obey'st in silence their sweet solemn spells, 15
 Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,

Around whose lessening and invisible height
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres;
And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound, 20
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
Breathed from their wormy beds all living things
around;
And, mingling with the still night and mute sky,
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild 25
And terrorless as this serenest night:
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child
Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human
sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep. 30
September, 1815.

LINES

THE cold earth slept below,
Above the cold sky shone;
And all around,
With a chilling sound,
From caves of ice and fields of snow 5
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

The wintry hedge was black,
The green grass was not seen,
The birds did rest 10
On the bare thorn's breast,

THE SUNSET

Whose roots, beside the pathway track,
 Had bound their folds o'er many a crack
 Which the frost had made between.

Thine eyes glowed in the glare 15
 Of the moon's dying light ;
 As a fen-fire's beam
 On a sluggish stream

Gleams dimly — so the moon shone there,
 And it yellowed the strings of thy raven hair,
 That shook in the wind of night. 21

The moon made thy lips pale, belovéd ;
 The wind made thy bosom chill ;
 The night did shed
 On thy dear head 25

Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
 Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
 Might visit thee at will.

November, 1815.

THE SUNSET

THERE late was One, within whose subtle being,
 As light and wind within some delicate cloud
 That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,
 Genius and death contended. None may know
 The sweetness of the joy which made his breath 5
 Fail, like the trances of the summer air,
 When, with the Lady of his love, who then
 First knew the unreserve of mingled being,
 He walked along the pathway of a field,
 Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er, 10
 But to the west was open to the sky.

There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers,
And the old dandelion's hoary beard, 15
And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay
On the brown massy woods — and in the east
The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose
Between the black trunks of the crowded trees,
While the faint stars were gathering overhead. 20
“Is it not strange, Isabel,” said the youth,
“I never saw the sun? We will walk here
To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me.”

That night the youth and lady mingled lay
In love and sleep — but when the morning came 25
The lady found her lover dead and cold.
Let none believe that God in mercy gave
That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,
But year by year lived on — in truth I think
Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles, 30
And that she did not die, but lived to tend
Her aged father, were a kind of madness,
If madness 't is to be unlike the world.
For but to see her were to read the tale
Woven by some subtlest bard, to make hard hearts
Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief; — 36
Her eyelashes were worn away with tears,
Her lips and cheeks were like things dead — so pale;
Her hands were thin, and through their wandering
veins
And weak articulations might be seen 40
Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self
Which one vexed ghost inhabits night and day,
Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee!

"Inheritor of more than earth can give,
 Passionless calm, and silence unreprieved, 45
 Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep! but rest,
 And are the uncomplaining things they seem,
 Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love;
 Oh, that like thine, mine epitaph were — Peace!"
 This was the only moan she ever made. 50

1816.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power
 Floats though unseen among us; visiting
 This various world with as inconstant wing
 As summer winds that creep from flower to flower.
 Like moonbeams that behind some jany mountain
 shower, 5

It visits with inconstant glance
 Each human heart and countenance;
 Like hues and harmonies of evening,
 Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
 Like memory of music fled, 10
 Like aught that for its grace may be
 Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate
 With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
 Of human thought or form, where art thou gone? 15
 Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
 This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
 Ask why the sunlight not for ever
 Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river;
 Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown;
 Why fear and dream and death and birth 21
 Cast on the daylight of this earth

Such gloom ; why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope.

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever 25

To sage or poet these responses given ;

Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavour :

Frail spells, whose uttered charm might not avail to
sever,

From all we hear and all we see, 30

Doubt, chance, and mutability.

Thy light alone, like mist o'er mountains driven,

Or music by the night wind sent

Through strings of some still instrument,

Or moonlight on a midnight stream, 35

Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds, depart

And come, for some uncertain moments lent.

Man were immortal and omnipotent,

Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art, 40

Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his
heart.

Thou messenger of sympathies

That wax and wane in lovers' eyes ;

Thou, that to human thought art nourishment,

Like darkness to a dying flame ; 45

Depart not as thy shadow came !

Depart not, lest the grave should be,

Like life and fear, a dark reality !

While yet a boy, I sought for ghosts, and sped

Through many a listening chamber, cave, and ruin,

And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing 51

Hopes of high talk with the departed dead ;
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is
fed.

I was not heard, I saw them not ;
When, musing deeply on the lot 55
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are woo-
ing

All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,
Sudden thy shadow fell on me :
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy ! 60

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine : have I not kept the vow ?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave : they have in visioned
bowers 65

Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatched with me the envious night :
They know that never joy illumed my brow,
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery, 70
That thou, O awful LOVELINESS,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express !

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past : there is a harmony
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky, 75
Which through the summer is not heard or seen,
As if it could not be, as if it had not been !
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply 80

Its calm, to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all humankind.

1816.

MONT BLANC

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

I

THE everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark — now glittering — now reflecting gloom —
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings 5
Of waters,— with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river 10
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve — dark, deep Ravine —
Thou many-coloured, many-voicéd vale,
Over whose pines and crags and caverns sail
Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams; awful scene, 15
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest: — thou dost lie,
Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging, 20
Children of elder time, in whose devotion

The chainless winds still come and ever came
 To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
 To hear — an old and solemn harmony :
 Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep 25
 Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil
 Robes some unsculptured image ; the strange sleep
 Which, when the voices of the desert fail,
 Wraps all in its own deep eternity ;
 Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion 30
 A loud, lone sound, no other sound can tame ;
 Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
 Thou art the path of that unresting sound,
 Dizzy Ravine ! and when I gaze on thee,
 I seem as in a trance sublime and strange 35
 To muse on my own separate fantasy,
 My own, my human mind, which passively
 Now renders and receives fast influencings,
 Holding an unremitting interchange
 With the clear universe of things around ; 40
 One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
 Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
 Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
 In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
 Seeking among the shadows that pass by, 45
 Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
 Som' hantom, some faint image ; till the breast
 From which they fled recalls them, thou art there !

III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
 Visit the soul in sleep, — that death is slumber, 50
 And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
 Of those who wake and live. I look on high ;
 Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled

The vale of life and death? Or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep 55
Spread far around and inaccessibly
Its circles? for the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales!
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky, 60
Mont Blanc appears, — still, snowy, and serene —
Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock: broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread 65
And wind among the accumulated steeps;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there — how hideously
Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high, 70
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven. — Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea
Of fire envelope once this silent snow?
None can reply — all seems eternal now. 75
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
So solemn, so serene, that man may be,
But for such faith, with nature reconciled;
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal 80
Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell 85

Within the dædal earth ; lightning and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower,— the bound 90
With which from that detested trance they leap ;
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
And that of him, and all that his may be ;
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die, revolve, subside, and swell. 95
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible :
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primeval mountains,
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep, 100
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far
fountains,
Slow rolling on ; there, many a precipice
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled — dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower 105
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream ; vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil 110
Branchless and shattered stand ; the rocks, drawn
down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil ; 115
Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
So much of life and joy is lost. The race

Of man flies far in dread : his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves 120
Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
Which, from those secret chasms in tumult welling,
Meet in the Vale, and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves, 125
Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

V

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high : — the power is there,
The still and solemn power, of many sights
And many sounds, and much of life and death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights, 130
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that mountain ; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them : — Winds con-
tend

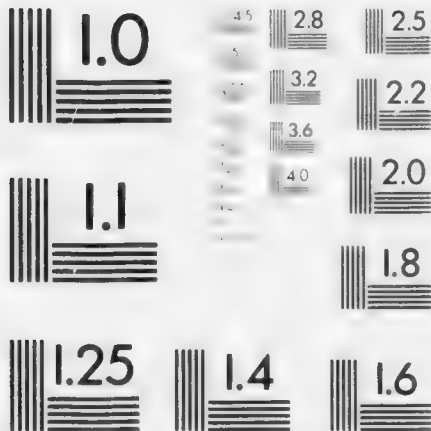
Silently there, and heap the snow, with breath 135
Rapid and strong, but silently ! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow. The secret strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome 140
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee !
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy ?

June 23, 1816.



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TO CONSTANTIA, SINGING

THUS to be lost and thus to sink and die,
 Perchance were death indeed! — Constantia, turn!
 In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie,
 Even though the sounds which were thy voice, which
 burn
 Between thy lips, are laid to sleep; 5
 Within thy breath and on thy hair, like odour it is
 yet,
 And from thy touch like fire doth leap.
 Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet,
 Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget!

A breathless awe, like the swift change 10
 Unseen but felt in youthful slumbers,
 Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange,
 Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers.
 The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven
 By the enchantment of thy strain, 15
 And on my shoulders wings are woven,
 To follow its sublime career,
 Beyond the mighty moons that wane
 Upon the verge of nature's utmost sphere,
 Till the world's shadowy walls are past and disap-
 pear.

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul — it lingers 21
 O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings,
 The blood and life within those snowy fingers
 Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.
 My brain is wild, my breath comes quick — 25
 The blood is listening in my frame,
 And thronging shadows, fast and thick,

Fall on my overflowing eyes;
 My heart is quivering like a flame;
 As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies, 30
 I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies.

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,
 Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song
 Flows on, and fills all things with melody.
 Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong, 35
 On which, like one in trance upborne,
 Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,
 Rejoicing like a cloud of morn;
 Now 't is the breath of summer night,
 Which, when the starry waters sleep 40
 Round western isles with incense-blossoms bright,
 Linger, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

1817.

SONNET — OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, 5
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: 10
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
 The lone and level sands stretch far away."

1817.

LINES

THAT time is dead for ever, child,
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever!

We look on the past,
And stare aghast
At the spectres wailing, pale, and ghast, 5
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.

The stream we gazed on then, rolled by;
Its waves are unreturning;

But we yet stand 10
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears which fade and fly
In the light of life's dim morning.
November 5, 1817.

LINES TO A CRITIC

HONEY from silkworms who can gather,
Or silk from the yellow bee?
The grass may grow in winter weather
As soon as hate in me.

Hate men who cant, and men who pray, 5
And men who rail like thee;
An equal passion to repay,—
They are not coy like me.

Or seek some slave of power and gold,
To be thy dear heart's mate; 10

ON A FADED VIOLET

19

Thy love will move that bigot cold,
Sooner than me thy hate.

A passion like the one I prove
Cannot divided be ;

I hate thy want of truth and love — 15
How should I then hate thee?

December, 1817.

PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES

LISTEN, listen, Mary mine,
To the whisper of the Apennine ;
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,
Or like the sea on a northern shore,
Heard in its raging ebb and flow 5
By the captives pent in the cave below.
The Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and gray,
Which between the earth and sky doth lay ;
But when night comes, a chaos dread 10
On the dim starlight then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm.

May 4, 1818.

ON A FADED VIOLET

THE odour from the flower is gone
Which like thy kisses breathed on me ;
The colour from the flower is flown
Which glowed of thee and only thee !

A shrivelled, lifeless, vacant form, 5
It lies on my abandoned breast,

20 WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS

And mocks the heart which yet is warm,
With cold and silent rest.

I weep,— my tears revive it not!

I sigh,— it breathes no more on me; 10

Its mute and uncomplaining lot

Is such as mine should be.

1818.

LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN
HILLS

MANY a green isle needs must be

In the deep wide sea of misery,

Or the mariner, worn and wan,

Never thus could voyage on

Day and night, and night and day, 5

Drifting on his dreary way,

With the solid darkness black

Closing round his vessel's track;

Whilst above, the sunless sky,

Big with clouds, hangs heavily; 10

And behind, the tempest fleet

Hurries on with lightning feet,

Riving sail, and cord, and plank,

Till the ship has almost drank

Death from the o'er-brimming deep, 15

And sinks down, down, like that sleep

When the dreamer seems to be

Weltering through eternity;

And the dim low line before

Of a dark and distant shore 20

Still recedes, as ever still

Longing with divided will,

But no power to seek or shun,
 He is ever drifted on
 O'er the unrepousing wave 25
 To the haven of the grave.
 What if there no friends will greet;
 What if there no heart will meet
 His with love's impatient beat;
 Wander wheresoe'er he may, 30
 Can he dream before that day
 To find refuge from distress
 In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
 Then 't will wreak him little woe
 Whether such there be or no: 35
 Senseless is the breast, and cold,
 Which relenting love would fold;
 Bloodless are the veins and chill
 Which the pulse of pain did fill;
 Every little living nerve 40
 That from bitter words did swerve
 Round the tortured lips and brow,
 Are like sapless leaflets now
 Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea 45
 Which tempests shake eternally,
 As once the wretch there lay to sleep,
 Lies a solitary heap,
 One white skull and seven dry bones,
 On the margin of the stones, 50
 Where a few gray rushes stand,
 Boundaries of the sea and land:
 Nor is heard one voice of wail
 But the seamews, as they sail
 O'er the billows of the gale; 55

Or the whirlwind up and down
 Howling, like a slaughtered town,
 When a king in glory rides
 Through the pomp of fratricides:
 Those unburied bones around 60
 There is many a mournful sound;
 There is no lament for him,
 Like a sunless vapour, dim,
 Who once clothed with life and thought
 What now moves nor murmurs not. 65

Ay, many flowering islands lie
 In the waters of wide Agony:
 To such a one this morn was led
 My bark, by soft winds piloted.
 'Mid the mountains Euganean, 70
 I stood listening to the pæan
 With which the legioned rooks did hail
 The sun's uprise majestic;
 Gathering round with wings all hoar,
 Through the dewy mist they soar 75
 Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven
 Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,
 Flecked with fire and azure, lie
 In the unfathomable sky,
 So their plumes of purple grain, 80
 Starred with drops of golden rain,
 Gleam above the sunlight woods,
 As in silent multitudes
 On the morning's fitful gale
 Through the broken mist they sail, 85
 And the vapours cloven and gleaming
 Follow down the dark steep streaming,
 Till all is bright, and clear, and still,
 Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea 90
 The waveless plain of Lombardy,
 Bounded by the vaporous air,
 Islanded by cities fair.

Underneath day's azure eyes,
 Ocean's nursling, Venice lies, — 95
 A peopled labyrinth of walls,
 Amphitrite's destined halls,

Which her hoary sire now paves
 With his blue and beaming waves.
 Lo! the sun upsprings behind, 100
 Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined

On the level quivering line
 Of the waters crystalline ;
 And before that chasm of light,
 As within a furnace bright, 105

Column, tower, and dome, and spire,
 Shine like obelisks of fire,
 Pointing with inconstant motion
 From the altar of dark ocean

To the sapphire-tinted skies ; 110
 As the flames of sacrifice
 From the marble shrines did rise,
 As to pierce the dome of gold
 Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City ! thou hast been 115
 Ocean's child, and then his queen ;
 Now is come a darker day,

And thou soon must be his prey,
 If the power that raised thee here
 Hallow so thy watery bier. 120

A less drear ruin than than now,
 With thy conquest-branded brow

Stooping to the slave of slaves
 From thy throne, among the waves
 Wilt thou be, when the seamew 125
 Flies, as once before it flew,
 O'er thine isles depopulate,
 And all is in its ancient state,
 Save where many a palace-gate
 With green sea-flowers overgrown 130
 Like a rock of ocean's own,
 Topples o'er the abandoned sea
 As the tides change sullenly.
 The fisher on his watery way,
 Wandering at the close of day, 135
 Will spread his sail and seize his oar,
 Till he pass the gloomy shore,
 Lest the dead should, from their sleep
 Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
 Lead a rapid masque of death 140
 O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold
 Quivering through ærial gold,
 As I now behold them here,
 Would imagine not they were 145
 Sepulchres, where human forms,
 Like pollution-nourished worms,
 To the corpse of greatness cling,
 Murdered and now mouldering :
 But if Freedom should awake 150
 In her omnipotence, and shake
 From the Celtic Anarch's hold
 All the keys of dungeons cold,
 Where a hundred cities lie
 Chained like thee, ingloriously, 155

Thou and all thy sister band
 Might adorn this sunny land,
 Twining memories of old time
 With new virtues more sublime;
 If not, perish thou and they; 160
 Clouds which stain truth's rising day
 By her sun consumed away,
 Earth can spare ye; while like flowers,
 In the waste of years and hours,
 From your dust new nations spring 165
 With more kindly blossoming.

Perish! let there only be
 Floating o'er thy hearthless sea,
 As the garment of thy sky
 Clothes the world immortally, 170
 One remembrance, more sublime
 Than the tattered pall of Time,
 Which scarce hides thy visage wan:
 That a tempest-cleaving swan
 Of the songs of Albion, 175
 Driven from his ancestral streams
 By the might of evil dreams,
 Found a nest in thee; and ocean
 Welcomed him with such emotion
 That its joy grew his, and sprung 180
 From his lips like music flung
 O'er a mighty thunder-fit,
 Chastening terror: what though yet
 Poesy's unfailing river,
 Which through Albion winds for ever, 185
 Lashing with melodious wave
 Many a sacred poet's grave,
 Mourn its latest nursling fled!

What though thou with all thy dead
 Scarce can for this fame repay 190
 Aught thine own, — oh, rather say,
 Though thy sins and slaveries foul
 Overcloud a sunlike soul!
 As the ghost of Homer clings
 Round Scamander's wasting springs 195
 As divinest Shakespeare's might
 Fills Avon and the world with light,
 Like omniscient power, which he
 Imaged 'mid mortality;
 As the love from Petrarch's urn 200
 Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
 A quenchless lamp, by which the heart
 Sees things unearthly; so thou art,
 Mighty spirit: so shall be
 The city that did refuge thee. 205

Lo, the sun floats up the sky,
 Like thought-wingéd Liberty,
 Till the universal light
 Seems to level plain and height;
 From the sea a mist has spread, 210
 And the beams of morn lie dead
 On the towers of Venice now,
 Like its glory long ago.
 By the skirts of that gray cloud
 Many-doméd Padua prond 215
 Stands, a peopled solitude,
 'Mid the harvest-shining plain,
 Where the peasant heaps his grain
 In the garner of his foe,
 And the milk-white oxen slow 220
 With the purple vintage strain,

Heaped upon the creaking wain,
 That the brutal Celt may swill
 Drunken sleep with savage will;
 And the sickle to the sword 225
 Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
 Like a weed whose shade is poison,
 Overgrows this region's foison,
 Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
 To destruction's harvest-home: 230
 Men must reap the things they sow,
 Force from force must ever flow,
 Or worse; but 'tis a bitter woe
 That love or reason cannot change
 The despot's rage, the slave's revenge. 235

Padua, thou within whose walls
 Those mute guests at festivals,
 Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
 Played at dice for Ezzelin,
 Till Death cried, "I win, I win!" 240
 And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
 But Death promised, to assuage her,
 That he would petition for
 Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
 When the destined years were o'er, 245
 Over all between the Po
 And the eastern Alpine snow,
 Under the mighty Austrian.
 Sin smiled so as Sin only can,
 And, since that time, ay, long before, 250
 Both have ruled from shore to shore,
 That incestuous pair, who follow
 Tyrants as the sun the swallow,
 As Repentance follows Crime,
 And as changes follow Time. 255

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
Padua, now no more is burning;
Like a meteor, whose wild way
Is lost over the grave of day,
It gleams betrayed and to betray: 260

Once remotest nations came
To adore that sacred flame,
When it lit not many a hearth
On this cold and gloomy earth ;
Now new fires from antique light 265
Spring beneath the wide world's might ;
But their spark lies dead in thee,
Trampled out by tyranny.

As the Norway woodman quells,
In the depth of piny dells, 270

One light flame among the brakes,
While the boundless forest shakes,
And its mighty trunks are torn
By the fire thus lowly born —

The spark beneath his feet is dead, 275

He starts to see the flames it fed
Howling through the darkened sky
With myriad tongues victoriously,
And sinks down in fear: so thou,
O tyranny! beholdest now

Light around thee, and thou hearest
The loud flames ascend, and fearest :
Grovel on the earth ; ay, hide
In the dust thy purple pride !

Noon descends around me now: 285
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist
Like a vaporous amethyst,

Or an air-dissolvéd star
 Mingling light and fragrance, far 290
 From the curved horizon's bound,
 To the point of heaven's profound,
 Fills the overflowing sky ;
 And the plains that silent lie
 Underneath. The leaves unsodden 295
 Where the infant frost has trodden
 With his morning-wingéd feet,
 Whose bright print is gleaming yet ;
 And the red and golden vines,
 Piercing with their trellised lines 300
 The rough, dark-skirted wilderness ;
 The dun and bladed grass no less,
 Pointing from this hoary tower
 In the windless air ; the flower
 Glimmering at my feet ; the line 305
 Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
 In the south dimly islanded ;
 And the Alps, whose snows are spread
 High between the clouds and sun ;
 And of living things each one ; 310
 And my spirit, which so long
 Darkened this swift stream of song,
 Interpenetrated lie
 By the glory of the sky :
 Be it love, light, harmony, 315
 Odour, or the soul of all
 Which from heaven like dew doth fall,
 Or the mind which feeds this verse
 Peopling the lone universe.

 Noon descends, and after noon 320
 Autumn's evening meets me soon,

Leading the infantine moon,
 And that one star, which to her
 Almost seems to minister
 Half the crimson light she brings 325
 From the sunset's radiant springs:
 And the soft dreams of the morn
 (Which like wingéd winds had borne,
 To that silent isle, which lies
 'Mid remembered agonies, 330
 The frail bark of this lone being),
 Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
 And its ancient pilot, Pain,
 Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be 335
 In the sea of life and agony:
 Other spirits float and flee
 O'er that gulf: even now, perhaps,
 On some rock the wild wave wraps,
 With folded wings they waiting sit 340
 For my bark, to pilot it
 To some calm and blooming cove,
 Where for me, and those I love,
 May a windless bower be built,
 Far from passion, pain, and guilt, 345
 In a dell 'mid lawny hills,
 Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
 And soft sunshine, and the sound
 Of old forests echoing round,
 And the light and smell divine 350
 Of all flowers that breathe and shine.
 We may live so happy there
 That the spirits of the air,
 Envyng us, may even entice

STANZAS

31

To our healing paradise 355
 The polluting multitude :
 But their rage would be subdued
 By that clime divine and calm,
 And the winds whose wings rain balm
 On the uplifted soul, and leaves 360
 Under which the bright sea heaves ;
 While each breathless interval
 In their whisperings musical
 The inspir'd soul supplies
 With its own deep melodies, 365
 And the love which heals all strife,
 Circling, like the breath of life,
 All things in that sweet abode
 With its own mild brotherhood.
 They, not it, would change ; and soon 370
 Every sprite beneath the moon
 Would repent its envy vain,
 And the earth grow young again.

October, 1818.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
 The waves are dancing fast and bright,
 Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
 The purple noon's transparent might ;
 The breath of the moist earth is light, 5
 Around its unexpanded buds ;
 Like many a voice of one delight,
 The winds, the birds, the ocean-floods,
 The City's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple seaweeds strown ; 10
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown ;
I sit upon the sands alone,
The lightning of the noontide ocean 15
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around, 20
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned,—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround ; 25
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure ;
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are ;
I could lie down like a tired child, 30
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne, and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea 35
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan ; 40

They might lament — for I am one
 Whom men love not — and yet regret,
 Unlike this day, which, when the sun
 Shall on its stainless glory set, 44
 Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.
 December, 1818.

LINES TO AN INDIAN AIR

I ARISE from dreams of thee
 In the first sweet sleep of night,
 When the winds are breathing low,
 And the stars are shining bright.
 I arise from dreams of thee, 5
 And a spirit in my feet
 Has led me — who knows how? —
 To thy chamber-window, sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
 On the dark, the silent stream; 10
 The champak odours fail
 Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
 The nightingale's complaint,
 It dies upon her heart,
 As I must die on thine 15
 O belovéd as thou art!

O lift me from the grass!
 I die, I faint, I fail!
 Let thy love in kisses rain
 On my lips and eyelids pale. 20
 My cheek is cold and white, alas!
 My heart beats loud and fast,

O! press it close to thine again,
Where it will break at last.

1819.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

THE fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean;
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle:
Why not I with thine?

5

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

10

15

1819.

SONG — TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND

MEN of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
From the cradle to the grave,

5

SONG — TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND 35

Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat — nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge, 10
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear 15
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears. 20

Sow seed, — but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth, — let no impostor heap;
Weave robes, — let not the idle wear:
Forge arms, — in your defence to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells; 25
In halls ye deck, another dwells.
Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plough and spade, and hoe and loom,
Trace your grave, and build your tomb, 30
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair
England be your sepulchre!

ENGLAND IN 1819

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king, —
 Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
 Through public scorn, — mud from a muddy spring;
 Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
 But leech-like to their fainting country cling, 5
 Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow;
 A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field;
 An army, which liberticide and prey
 Make as a two-edged sword to all who wield;
 Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;
 Religion Christless, Godless, — a book sealed; 11
 A Senate, — time's worst statute unrepealed, —
 Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may
 Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

1819.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes; O thou,
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed 5

The wingéd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill 10
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill :

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere ;
Destroyer and preserver ; hear, O hear !

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commo-
tion, 15
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of heaven and
ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning ; there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head 20

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim
verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre, 25
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst ; O hear !

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, 30
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers 35
 So sweet the sense faints picturing them! Thou
 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know 40

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
 And tremble and despoil themselves: O hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share 45

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
 Than thou, O uncontrollable! if even
 I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
 As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed 50
 Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
 O! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
 I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed 55
 One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

35
Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone, 60
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

10
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth;
And, by the incantation of this verse, 65

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

5
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? 70
1819.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

A LYRICAL DRAMA, IN FOUR ACTS

Audiane hæc, Amphiaræ, sub terram abdite ?

PREFACE

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation, or to imitate in story, as in title, their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar license. The *Prometheus Unbound* of Æschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Æschylus ; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan : and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical

character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandizement, which, in the Hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling, it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever-winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening of spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied me) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition; for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the

spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England, has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakespeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition, or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from

his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest ; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others ; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers : he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art ; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness ; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope ; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, "a passion for reforming the world" : what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part, I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon than go to heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence ; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence ; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life, which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and

superstition flatter themselves that I should take Æschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid ; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them : if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient ; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts ; the pile they raise will betray his grave, which might otherwise have been unknown.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PROMETHEUS
DEMOGORGON
JUPITER
The EARTH
OCEAN
APOLLO
MERCURY
HERCULES

ASIA,	}	<i>Oceanides</i>
PANTHEA,		
IONE,		
The PHANTASM OF JUPITER		
The SPIRIT OF THE EARTH		
The SPIRIT OF THE MOON		
SPIRITS OF THE HOURS		
SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS		
FURIES		

ACT I

SCENE, *A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus.*
PROMETHEUS *is discovered bound to the Precipice.*
PANTHEA and IONE *are seated at his feet. Time, Night.*
During the Scene, Morning slowly breaks.

PROMETHEUS

Monarch of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes ! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou 5
Requiest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,

With fear and self-contempt and barren hope :
 Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
 Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn, 10
 O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
 Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
 And moments aye divided by keen pangs
 Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
 Scorn and despair, — these are mine empire, 15
 More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
 From thine unenvied throne, O mighty God !
 Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
 Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
 Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain, 20
 Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured ; without herb,
 Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
 Ah me ! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever !

No change, no pause, no hope ! Yet I endure.
 I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt ? 25
 I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
 Has it not seen ? The Sea, in storm or calm,
 Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
 Have its deaf waves not heard my agony ?
 Ah me ! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever ! 30

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
 Of their moon-freezing crystals : the bright chains
 Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
 Heaven's wingéd hound, polluting from thy lips
 His beak in poison not his own, tears up 35
 My heart : and shapeless sights come wandering by,
 The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
 Mocking me : and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
 To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds

When the rocks split and close again behind ; 40
While from their loud abysses howling throug
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn, 45
Or, starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-coloured east ; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom —
As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim —
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood 50
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
Disdain ! Ah no ! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hant thee undefended through the wide Heaven !
How ! thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror, 55
Gape like a hell within ! I speak in grief,
Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voicéd Echoes, through the mist 60
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell !
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering through India ! Thou serenest Air, 64
Through which the Sun walks burning without beams '
And the swift Whirlwinds, who on poiséd wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orbéd world ! If then my words had power,
Though I am changed so that aught evil wish 70
Is dead within ; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now !
What was that curse ? for ye all heard me speak.

FIRST VOICE : *from the Mountains*

Thrice three hundred thousand years
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood : 75
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
We trembled in our multitude.

SECOND VOICE : *from the Springs*

Thunderbolts had parched our water,
We had been stained with bitter blood,
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter, 80
Through a city and a solitude.

THIRD VOICE : *from the Air*

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
Its wastes in colours not their own ;
And oft had my serene repose
Been cloven by many a rending groan. 85

FOURTH VOICE : *from the Whirlwinds*

We had soared beneath these mountains
Unresting ages ; nor had thunder,
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under
Ever made us mute with wonder. 90

FIRST VOICE

But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

SECOND VOICE

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.
A pilot asleep on the howling sea 95
Leaped up from the deck in agony,

And heard, and cried, "Ah, woe is me!"
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

THIRD VOICE

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
My still realm was never riven: 100
When its wound was closed, there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

FOURTH VOICE

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence — thus — and thus — 105
Though silence is a hell to us.

THE EARTH

The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills
Cried, "Misery!" then; the hollow Heaven replied,
"Misery!" and the Ocean's purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds, 110
And the pale nations heard it, "Misery!"

PROMETHEUS

I hear a sound of voices: not the voice
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou
Scorn him without whose all-enduring will
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove, 115
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
The Titan? he who made his agony
The barrier to your else all-conquering Foe?
O rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams, 120
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
Through whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once

With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes ;
 Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
 To commune with me ? me alone, who checked, 125
 As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
 The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
 Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
 Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses.
 Why answer ye not, still, Brethren ? 130

THE EARTH

They dare not.

PROMETHEUS

Who dares ? for I would hear that curse again.
 Ha ! what an awful whisper rises up !
 'Tis scarce like sound : it tingles through the frame
 As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.
 Speak, Spirit ! From thine inorganic voice, 135
 I only know that thou art moving near
 And love. How cursed I him ?

THE EARTH

How canst thou hear

Who knowest not the language of the dead ?

PROMETHEUS

Thou art a living spirit : speak as they !

THE EARTH

I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King 140
 Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain
 More torturing than the one whereon I roll.
 Subtle thou art and good ; and though the Gods
 Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God,
 Being wise and kind : earnestly hearken now ! 145

PROMETHEUS

Obscurely through my brain, like shadows dim,
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;
Yet 't is not pleasure.

THE EARTH

No, thou canst not hear:
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known 150
Only to those who die.

PROMETHEUS

And what art thou,
O melancholy Voice?

THE EARTH

I am the Earth,
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air, 155
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust, 160
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us: their inhabitants beheld
My spheréd light wane in wide Heaven; the sea 165
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;

Blue thistles bloomed in cities ; foodless toads 170
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled :
When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,
And Famine ; and black blight on herb and tree ;
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds 175
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
With grief ; and the thin air, my breath, was stained
With the contagion of a mother's hate
Breathed on her child's destroyer ; ay, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not, 180
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,
And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words, 185
But dare not speak them.

PROMETHEUS

Venerable mother !

All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort ; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
And love, though fleeting ; these may not be mine.
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not ! 190

THE EARTH

They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,
The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know, there are two worlds of life and death : 195
One, that which thou beholdest ; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live,

Till death unite them and they part no more ;
 Dreams and the light imaginings of men, 200
 And all that faith creates or love desires,
 Terrible, strange, sublime, and beauteous shapes.
 There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,
 Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains ; all the Gods
 Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds, 205
 Vast, sceptred phantoms ; heroes, men, and beasts ;
 And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom ;
 And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
 Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
 The curse which all remember. Call at will 210
 Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
 Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
 From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin
 Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
 Ask, and they must reply : so the revenge 215
 Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,
 As rainy wind through the abandoned gate
 Of a fallen palace.

PROMETHEUS

Mother, let not aught
 Of that which may be evil, pass again
 My lips, or those of aught resembling me. 220
 Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear !

IONE

My wings are folded o'er mine ears :
 My wings are crosséd o'er mine eyes :
 Yet through their silver shade appears,
 And through their lulling plumes arise, 225
 A Shape, a throng of sounds.
 May it be no ill to thee

O thou of many wounds!
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
Ever thus we watch and wake. 230

PANTHEA

The sound is of whirlwind underground,
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;
The shape is awful like the sound,
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
A sceptre of pale gold, 235
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud,
His veinéd hand doth hold.
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

PHANTASM OF JUPITER

Why have the secret powers of this strange world
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither 241
On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk
In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou? 245

PROMETHEUS

Tremendous Image! as thou art must be
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
Although no thought inform thine empty voice!

THE EARTH

Listen! and though your echoes must be mute, 250
Gray mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak!

PHANTASM

A spirit seizes me and speaks within:
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud

255

PANTHEA

See how he lifts his mighty looks! the Heaven
Darkens above!

IONE

He speaks! O shelter me!

PROMETHEUS

I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,
Written as on a scroll: yet speak! O speak!

260

PHANTASM

Fiend, I defy thee! with calm, fixed mind,
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Humankind,
One only being shalt thou not subdue.
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;
And let alternate frost and fire
Eat into me, and be thine ire
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms!

265

270

Ay, do thy worst! Thou art omnipotent.

O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent

To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.
Let thy malignant spirit move

275

In darkness over those I love:
On me and mine I imprecate
The utmost torture of thy hate;
And thus devote to sleepless agony, 280
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O thou,
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe, — 285
I curse thee! Let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;
Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony;
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain, 290
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain!

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,
Ill deeds; then be thou damned, beholding good;
Both infinite as is the universe,
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude! 295
An awful image of calm power
Though now thou sittest, let the hour
Come, when thou must appear to be
That which thou art internally.
And after many a false and fruitless crime 300
Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space
and time!

PROMETHEUS

Were these my words, O Parent?

THE EARTH

They were thine.

PROMETHEUS

It doth repent me : words are quick and vain ;
 Grief for a while is blind, and so was mine.
 I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

305

THE EARTH

Misery, Oh misery to me,
 That Jove at length should vanquish thee !
 Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,
 The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.
 Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead, 310
 Your refuge, your defence, lies fallen and vanquishéd !

FIRST ECHO

Lies fallen and vanquishéd !

SECOND ECHO

Fallen and vanquishéd !

IONE

Fear not : 't is but some passing spasm :
 The Titan is unvanquished still. 315
 But see, where through the azure chasm
 Of yon forked and snowy hill,
 Trampling the slant winds on high
 With golden-sandalled feet, that glow
 Under plumes of purple dye, 320
 Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
 A Shape comes now,
 Stretching on high from his right hand
 A serpent-cinctured wand.

PANTHEA

'T is Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury. 325

IONE

And who are those with hydra tresses
And iron wings that climb the wind,
Whom the frowning God represses,
Like vapours steaming up behind,
Clanging loud, an endless crowd — 330

PANTHEA

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

IONE

Are they now led from the thin dead, 335
On new pangs to be fed?

PANTHEA

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

FIRST FURY

Ha! I scent life!

SECOND FURY

Let me but look into his eyes!

THIRD FURY

The hope of torturing him smells like a heap 340
Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle.

FIRST FURY

Darest thou delay, O Herald! Take cheer, Hounds
Of Hell: What if the Son of Maia soon

Should make us food and sport — who can please long
The Omnipotent?

MERCURY

Back to your towers of iron, 345
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail,
Your foodless teeth! Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends,
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate: 350
These shall perform your task.

FIRST FURY

Oh, mercy! mercy!
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

MERCURY

Crouch then in silence!

Awful Sufferer!

To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the Great Father's will driven down, 355
To execute a doom of new revenge.
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight
Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell,
So thy worn form pursues me night and day, 360
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught, 365
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms
With the strange might of unimagined pains
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,

And my commission is to lead them here,
 Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends 370
 People the abyss, and leave them to their task.
 Be it not so! There is a secret known
 To thee, and to none else of living things,
 Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
 The fear of which perplexes the Supreme: 375
 Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
 In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,
 And, like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
 Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:
 For benefits and meek submission tame 380
 The fiercest and the mightiest.

PROMETHEUS

Evil minds
 Change good to their own nature. I gave all
 He has; and in return he chains me here
 Years, ages, night and day: whether the Sun
 Split my parched skin, or in the moony night 385
 The crystal-wingéd snow cling round my hair:
 Whilst my belovéd race is trampled down
 By his thought-executing ministers.
 Such is the Tyrant's recompense. 'Tis just:
 He who is evil can receive no good; 390
 And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,
 He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude:
 He but requites me for his own misdeed.
 Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
 With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge. 395
 Submission, thou dost know I cannot try:
 For what submission but that fatal word,
 The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
 Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,

Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept, 400
Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield.
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs, 405
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
Enduring thus, the retributive hour
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour. Fear delay!
Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown. 410

MERCURY

Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict,
And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

PROMETHEUS

I know but this, that it must come.

MERCURY

Alas!

Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain? 415

PROMETHEUS

They last while Jove must reign; nor more, nor less
Do I desire or fear.

MERCURY

Yet pause, and plunge
Into eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind 420
Flags wearily in its unending flight,

Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless ;
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years
Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved ? 424

PROMETHEUS

Perchance no thought can count them, yet they pass.

MERCURY

If thou mightst dwell among the Gods the while
Lapped in voluptuous joy ?

PROMETHEUS

I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

MERCURY

Alas ! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

PROMETHEUS

Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven, 430
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
As light in the sun, throned. How vain is talk !
Call up the fiends !

IONE

O sister, look ! White fire
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar ;
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind ! 435

MERCURY

I must obey his words and thine : alas !
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart !

PANTHEA

See where the child of Heaven, with wingéd feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

IONE

Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes, 440
 Lest thou behold and die. They come, they come,
 Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
 And hollow underneath, like death.

FIRST FURY

Prometheus!

SECOND FURY

Immortal Titan!

THIRD FURY

Champion of Heaven's slaves!

PROMETHEUS

He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here ; 445
 Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,
 What and who are ye? Never yet there came
 Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell
 From the all-miscreative brain of Jove ;
 Whilst I behold such execrable shapes, 450
 Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,
 And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

FIRST FURY

We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
 And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
 And clinging crime : and, as lean dogs pursue 455
 Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing
 fawn,
 We track all things that weep, and bleed, and
 live,
 When the great King betrays them to our will.

PROMETHEUS

O many fearful natures in one name,
I know ye ; and these lakes and echoes know 460
The darkness and the clangour of your wings.
But why more hideous than your loathéd selves
Gather ye up in legions from the deep ?

SECOND FURY

We knew not that : Sisters, rejoice, rejoice !

PROMETHEUS

Can aught exult in its deformity ? 465

SECOND FURY

The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,
Gazing on one another : so are we.
As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
To gather for her festal crown of flowers
The aërial crimson falls, flushing her cheek, 470
So from our victim's destined agony
The shade which is our form invests us round ;
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

PROMETHEUS

I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain ! 475

FIRST FURY

Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone,
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within ?

PROMETHEUS

Pain is my element, as hate is thine.
Ye rend me now : I care not.

SECOND FURY

Dost imagine

We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes? 486

PROMETHEUS

I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,
 Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
 You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

THIRD FURY

Thou think'st we will live through thee, one by one,
 Like animal life, and, though we can obscure not 485
 The soul which burns within, that we will dwell
 Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
 Vexing the self-content of wisest men :
 That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
 And foul desire round thine astonished heart, 490
 And blood within thy labyrinthine veins
 Crawling like agony ?

PROMETHEUS

Why, ye are thus now ;

Yet am I king over myself, and rule
 The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
 As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous. 495

CHORUS OF FURIES

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the
 earth,
 Where the night has its grave and the morning its
 birth,

Come, come, come!

O ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
 When cities sink howling in ruin ; and ye 500

Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,
And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck;

Come, come, come!

Leave the bed, low, cold, and red, 505
Strewed beneath a nation dead;
Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning:
It will burst in bloodier flashes

When ye stir it, soon returning: 510
Leave the self-contempt implanted
In young spirits, sense-enchanted,

Misery's yet unkindled fuel:
Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted

To the maniac dreamer; cruel 515
More than ye can be with hate,
Is he with fear.

Come, come, come!

We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate
And we burthen the blasts of the atmosphere,
But vainly we toil till ye come here. 521

IONE

Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

PANTHEA

These solid mountains quiver with the sound,
Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make 524
The space within my plumes more black than night.

FIRST FURY

Your call was as a wingéd car,
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;
It rapt us from red gulfs of war.

SECOND FURY

From wide cities, famine-wasted ;

THIRD FURY

Groans half heard, and blood untasted ; 530

FOURTH FURY

Kingly conclaves, stern and cold,
Where blood with gold is bought and sold ;

FIFTH FURY

From the furnace, white and hot,
In which —

A FURY

Speak not : whisper not :
I know all that ye would tell, 535
But to speak might break the spell
Which must bend the Invincible,
The stern of thought ;
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

FURY

Tear the veil !

ANOTHER FURY

It is torn.

CHORUS

The pale stars of the morn 540
Shine on a misery, dire to be borne.
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan ? We laugh thee to
scorn.
Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst
for man ?

Then was kindled within him a thirst which out-
ran

Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever, 545

Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.

One came forth of gentle worth,

Smiling on the sanguine earth;

His words outlived him, like swift poison

Withering up truth, peace, and pity. 550

Look! where round the wide horizon

Many a million-peopled city

Vomits smoke in the bright air;

Mark that outcry of despair!

'Tis his mild and gentle ghost 555

Wailing for the faith he kindled:

Look again! the flames almost

To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:

The survivors round the embers

Gather in dread. 560

Joy, joy, joy!

Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers;

And the future is dark, and the present is spread

Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

SEMICHORUS I

Drops of bloody agony flow 565

From his white and quivering brow.

Grant a little respite now:

See! a disenchanted nation

Springs like day from desolation;

To Truth its state is dedicate, 570

And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;

A legions band of linked brothers,

Whom Love calls children —

SEMICHORUS II

'T is another's :
 See how kindred murder kin !
 'T is the vintage-time for death and sin. 575
 Blood, like new wine, bubbles within :
 Till Despair smothers
 The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.
[All the FURIES vanish, except one.]

IONE

Hark, sister ! what a low yet dreadful groan
 Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart 580
 Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
 And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
 Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him ?

PANTHEA

Alas ! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

IONE

What didst thou see ?

PANTHEA

A woful sight : a youth 585
 With patient looks, nailed to a crucifix.

IONE

What next ?

PANTHEA

The heaven around, the earth below,
 Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
 All horrible, and wrought by human hands ;
 And some appeared the work of human hearts, 590
 For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles ;

And other sights too foul to speak and live
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

FURY

Behold an emblem: those who do endure 595
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn and chains, but
heap
Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.

PROMETHEUS

Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood: it mingles with thy tears! 600
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
Oh horrible! Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse. I see, I see 605
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home, —
An early-chosen, late-lamented home, —
As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind; 610
Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells;
Some — Hear I not the multitude laugh loud? —
Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms
Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood 615
By the red light of their own burning homes.

FURY

Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans:
Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

PROMETHEUS

Worse?

FURY

In each human heart terror survives
 The ruin it has gorged: the loftiest fear 620
 All that they would disdain to think were true:
 Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
 The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
 They dare not devise good for man's estate,
 And yet they know not that they do not dare. 625
 The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
 The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
 The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
 And all best things are thus confused to ill.
 Many are strong and rich, and would be just, 630
 But live among their suffering fellow-men
 As if none felt: they know not what they do.

PROMETHEUS

Thy words are like a cloud of wingéd snakes;
 And yet I pity those they torture not.

FURY

Thou pitiest them? I speak no more! 635
 [*Vanishes.*]

PROMETHEUS

Ah woe!

Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!
 I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
 Thy works within my woe-illumined mind,
 Thou subtle Tyrant! Peace is in the grave:
 The grave hides all things beautiful and good. 640
 I am a God and cannot find it there,

Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,
This is defeat, fierce King! not victory.
The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
With new endurance, till the hour arrives 645
When they shall be no types of things which are.

PANTHEA

Alas! what sawest thou?

PROMETHEUS

There are two woes:
To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.
Names are there, Nature's sacred watchwords, they
Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry; 650
The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,
As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!
Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil. 655
This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

THE EARTH

I felt thy torture, son, with such mixed joy
As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state,
I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits, 659
Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,
And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,
Its world-surrounding ether: they behold
Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

PANTHEA

Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather, 665
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue air!

IONE

And see! more come,
Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
And hark! is it the music of the pines? 670
Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?

PANTHEA

'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

From unremembered ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppressed mortality! 675
And we breathe, and sicken not,
The atmosphere of human thought:
Be it dim, and dank, and gray,
Like a storm-extinguished day,
Travelled o'er by dying gleams: 680
Be it bright as all between
Cloudless skies and windless streams,
Silent, liquid, and serene.
As the birds within the wind,
As the fish within the wave, 685
As the thoughts of man's own mind
Float through all above the grave:
We make there our liquid lair,
Voyaging clondlike and unpent
Through the boundless element. 690
Thence we bear the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee!

IONE

More yet come, one by one: the air around them
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

FIRST SPIRIT

On a battle-trumpet's blast 695
 I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
 'Mid the darkness upward cast.
 From the dust of creeds outworn,
 From the tyrant's banner torn,
 Gathering round me, onward borne, 700
 There was mingled many a cry —
 Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
 Till they faded through the sky;
 And one sound, above, around,
 One sound, beneath, around, above, 705
 Was moving; 't was the soul of love:
 'T was the hope, the prophecy,
 Which begins and ends in thee.

SECOND SPIRIT

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
 Which rocked beneath, immovably; 710
 And the triumphant storm did flee,
 Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
 Between, with many a captive cloud,
 A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
 Each by lightning riven in half. 715
 I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:
 Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
 And spread beneath a hell of death
 O'er the white waters. I alit
 On a great ship lightning-split, 720
 And speeded hither on the sigh
 Of one who gave an enemy
 His plank, then plunged aside to die.

THIRD SPIRIT

I sate beside a sage's bed,
And the lamp was burning red 725
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame
To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same
Which had kindled long ago 730
Pity, eloquence, and woe;
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade its lustre made.
It has borne me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet: 735
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

FOURTH SPIRIT

On a poet's lips I slept,
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept; 740
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the ærial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illumine 745
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality! 750
One of these awakened me,
And I sped to succour thee.

IONE

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west
Come, as two doves to one belovéd nest,
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air, 755
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?
And, hark! their sweet, sad voices! 't is despair
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

PANTHEA

Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.

IONE

Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float 760
On their sustaining wings of skyey grain,
Orange and azure deepening into gold!
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

FIFTH SPIRIT

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's
wildernesses, 765
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-
braided pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial
tresses:
His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I
passed 't was fading,
And hollow ruin yawned behind: great sages bound
in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished,
unupbraiding, 770

Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou, O
 King of sadness,
 Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected
 gladness.

SIXTH SPIRIT

Ah, sister ! Desolation is a delicate thing :
 It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
 But treads with silent footstep, and fans with silent
 wing 775
 The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and
 gentlest bear ;
 Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes
 above,
 And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy
 feet,
 Dream visions of aërial joy, and call the monster
 Love,
 And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom
 now we greet. 780

CHORUS

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,
 Following him, destroyingly,
 On Death's white and wingéd steed,
 Which the fleetest cannot flee,
 Trampling down both flower and weed, 785
 Man and beast, and foul and fair,
 Like a tempest through the air ;
 Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
 Woundless though in heart or limb.

PROMETHEUS

Spirits ! how know ye this shall be ? 790

CHORUS

In the atmosphere we breathe,
 As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,
 From spring gathering up beneath,
 Whose mild winds shake the elder-brake,
 And the wandering herdsmen know 795
 That the white-thorn soon will blow:
 Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
 When they struggle to increase,
 Are to us as soft winds be
 To shepherd-boys, the prophecy 800
 Which begins and ends in thee.

IONE

Where are the Spirits fled?

PANTHEA

Only a sense
 Remains of them, like the omnipotence
 Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
 Languish, ere yet the responses are mute, 805
 Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul,
 Like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll.

PROMETHEUS

How fair these air-born shapes! and yet I feel
 Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,
 Asia! who, when my being overflowed, 810
 Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
 Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
 All things are still: alas! how heavily
 This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;
 Though I should dream I could even sleep with
 grief 815

If slumber were denied not. I would fain
 Be what it is my destiny to be,
 The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
 Or sink into the original gulf of things :
 There is no agony, and no solace left ; 820
 Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

PANTHEA

Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
 The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
 The shadow of thy spirit falls on her ?

PROMETHEUS

I said all hope was vain but love : thou lovest. 825

PANTHEA

Deeply in truth ; but the eastern star looks white,
 And Asia waits in that far Indian vale,
 The scene of her sad exile ; rugged once
 And desolate and frozen, like this ravine ;
 But now invested with fair flowers and herbs, 830
 And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
 Among the woods and waters, from the ether
 Of her transforming presence, which would fade
 If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell !

ACT II

SCENE I. — *Morning. A lovely vale in the Indian
 Caucasus. ASIA, alone.*

ASIA

From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended :
 Yes, like a spirit, like a thought which makes

Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,
Which should have learnt repose : thou hast descended
Cradled in tempests ; thou dost wake, O Spring ! 6
O child of many winds ! As suddenly
Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet ;
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up 10
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
The desert of our life.

This is the season, this the day, the hour ;
At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
Too long desired, too long delaying, come ! 15
How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl !
The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains : through a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake 20
Reflects it ; now it wanes : it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air :
'Tis lost ! and through yon peaks of cloudlike snow
The roseate sunlight quivers : hear I not 25
The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn ? [PANTHEA enters.

I feel, I see

Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in
tears,

Like stars half-quenched in mists of silver dew.
Belovéd and most beautiful, who wearest 30
The shadow of that soul by which I live,
How late thou art ! the spheréd sun had climbed
The sea ; my heart was sick with hope, before
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

PANTHEA

Pardon, great Sister! but my wings were faint 35
 With the delight of a remembered dream,
 As are the noontide plumes of summer winds
 Sate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep
 Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm,
 Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy 40
 Unhappy love, had made, through use and pity,
 Both love and woe familiar to my heart
 As they had grown to thine: erewhile I slept
 Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean
 Within dim bowers of green and purple moss, 45
 Our young Ione's soft and milky arms
 Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,
 While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within
 The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom:
 But not as now, since I am made the wind 50
 Which fails beneath the music that I bear
 Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved
 Into the sense with which love talks, my rest
 Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours
 Too full of care and pain.

ASIA

Lift up thine eyes, 55
 And let me read thy dream.

PANTHEA

As I have said,
 With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
 The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
 Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
 From the keen ice shielding our linked sleep. 60
 Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.

But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell 65
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy:
"Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
With loveliness — more fair than aught but her,
Whose shadow thou art — lift thine eyes on me!" 70
I lifted them: the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er
By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere 75
Which wrapt me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm ether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle through my blood 80
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
And I was thus absorbed, until it past,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night 85
My being was condensed; and as the rays
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
Like footsteps of weak melody: thy name
Among the many sounds alone I heard 90
Of what might be articulate; though still
I listened through the night when sound was none.
Ione wakened then, and said to me:
"Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night?
I always knew what I desired before, 95

Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.
But now I cannot tell thee what I seek;
I know not: something sweet, since it is sweet
Even to desire; it is thy sport, false sister;
Thou hast discovered some enchantment old, 100
Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept
And mingled it with thine: for when just now
We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips
The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth
Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint, 105
Quivered between our intertwining arms."
I answered not, for the eastern star grew pale,
But fled to thee.

ASIA

Thou speakest, but thy words
Are as the air: I feel them not. Oh, lift
Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul! 110

PANTHEA

I lift them, though they droop beneath the load
Of that they would express: what canst thou see
But thine own fairest shadow imaged there?

ASIA

Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven
Contracted to two circles underneath 115
Their long, fine lashes: dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.

PANTHEA

Why lookest thou as if a spirit past?

ASIA

There is a change : beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade, a shape : 't is He, arrayed 120
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.
Prometheus, it is thine! Depart not yet!
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
Within that bright pavilion which their beams 125
Shall build on the waste world? The dream is told.
What shape is that between us? Its rude hair
Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard
Is wild and quick, yet 't is a thing of air,
For through its gray robe gleams the golden dew 130
Whose stars the noon has quenched not.

DREAM

Follow! Follow!

PANTHEA

It is mine other dream.

ASIA

It disappears.

PANTHEA

It passes now into my mind. Methought
As we sate here, the flower-enfolding buds
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree, 135
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
A wind swept forth wrinkling the earth with frost:
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief, 140
O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

ASIA

As you speak, your words

Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
With shapes. Methought among the lawns together

We wandered, underneath the young gray dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds 145
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains,

Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind ;
And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,
Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently ;
And there was more which I remember not : 150

But on the shadows of the morning clouds,
Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW! as they vanished by ;
And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had
fallen,

The like was stamped, as with a withering fire ; 155
A wind arose among the pines : it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of
ghosts,

Were heard : O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME!
And then I said : " Panthea, look on me ! " 160
But in the depth of those beloved eyes
Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

ECHO

Follow, follow !

PANTHEA

The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices,
As they were spirit-tongued.

ASIA

It is some being 164
Around the crags. What fine clear sounds! O, list!

ECHOES (*unseen*)

Echoes we: listen!

We cannot stay:

As dew-stars glisten

Then fade away —

Child of Ocean! 170

ASIA

Hark! Spirits speak. The liquid responses
Of their aërial tongues yet sound.

PANTHEA

I hear.

ECHOES

O, follow, follow,

As our voice recedeth

Through the caverns hollow, 175

Where the forest spreadeth;

(*More distant.*)

O, follow, follow!

Through the caverns hollow,

As the song floats thou pursue,

Where the wild bee never flew, 180

Through the noontide darkness deep,

By the odour-breathing sleep

Of faint night-flowers, and the waves

At the fountain-lighted caves,

While our music, wild and sweet, 185

Mocks thy gently falling feet,

Child of Ocean!

ASIA

Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more faint
And distant.

PANTHEA

List! the strain floats nearer now.

ECHOES

In the world unknown 190
Sleeps a voice unspoken;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken;
Child of Ocean!

ASIA

How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind! 195

ECHOES

O, follow, follow!
Through the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noontide dew,
By the forests, lakes, and fountains, 200
Through the many-folded mountains;
To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms,
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and Thou
Parted, to commingle now; 205
Child of Ocean!

ASIA

Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE II. — *A Forest, interrungled with Rocks and Caverns. ASIA and PANTHEA pass into it. Two young Fauns are sitting on a Rock, listening.*

SEMICHORUS I OF SPIRITS

The path through which that lovely twain
 Have past, by cedar, pine, and yew, 210
 And each dark tree that ever grew,
 Is curtained out from heaven's wide blue ;
 Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
 Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
 Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew, 215
 Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
 Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
 Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers
 Of the green laurel, blown anew ;
 And bends, and then fades silently, 220
 One frail and fair anemone :
 Or when some star of many a one
 That climbs and wanders through steep night,
 Has found the cleft through which alone
 Beams fall from high those depths upon, 225
 Ere it is borne away, away,
 By the swift heavens that cannot stay,
 It scatters drops of golden light,
 Like lines of rain that ne'er unite :
 And the gloom divine is all around ; 230
 And underneath is the mossy ground.

SEMICHORUS II

There the voluptuous nightingales,
 Are awake through all the broad noonday.
 When one with bliss or sadness fails,
 And through the windless ivy-boughs, 235
 Sick with sweet love, droops dying away

On its mate's music-panting bosom ;
 Another, from the swinging blossom,
 Watching to catch the languid close
 Of the last strain, then lifts on high 240
 The wings of the weak melody,
 Till some new strain of feeling bear
 The song, and all the woods are mute ;
 When there is heard through the dim air
 The rush of wings, and rising there 245
 Like many a lake-surrounded flute,
 Sounds overflow the listener's brain
 So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

SEMICHORUS I

There those enchanted eddies play
 Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw, 250
 By Demogorgon's mighty law,
 With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
 All spirits on that secret way ;
 As inland boats are driven to Ocean
 Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw ; 255
 And first there comes a gentle sound
 To those in talk or slumber bound,
 And wakes the destined soft emotion,
 Attracts, impels them : those who saw
 Say from the breathing earth behind 260
 There steams a plume-uplifting wind
 Which drives them on their path, while they
 Believe their own swift wings and feet
 The sweet desires within obey :
 And so they float upon their way, 265
 Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
 The storm of sound is driven along,
 Sucked up and hurrying : as they fleet
 Behind, its gathering billows meet

And to the fatal mountain bear 270
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

FIRST FAUN

Canst thou imagine where those spirits live
Which make such delicate music in the woods?
We haunt within the least frequented caves
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds, 275
Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft:
Where may they hide themselves?

SECOND FAUN

'Tis hard to tell:

I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave 280
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float
Under the green and golden atmosphere
Which noontide kindles through the woven leaves;
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air, 285
The which they breathed within those lucent
domes,

Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
Under the waters of the earth again. 290

FIRST FAUN

If such live thus, have others other lives,
Under pink blossoms or within the bells
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
Or on their dying odours, when they die,
Or in the sunlight of the spheréd dew? 295

SECOND FAUN

Ay, many more which we may well divine.
 But should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
 And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,
 And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
 Of fate, and chance, and God, and Chaos old, 300
 And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,
 And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
 One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer
 Our solitary twilights, and which charm
 To silence the unenvying nightingales. 305

SCENE III. — *A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains.*
 ASIA and PANTHEA.

PANTHEA

Hither the sound has borne us — to the realm
 Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
 Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
 Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
 Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth, 310
 And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
 That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
 To deep intoxication; and uplift,
 Like Mænads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!
 The voice which is contagion to the world. 315

ASIA

Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent!
 How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be
 The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
 Though evil stain its work, and it should be
 Like its creation, weak yet beautiful, 320
 I could fall down and worship that and thee.
 Even now my heart adoreth. Wonderful!

Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain :
 Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
 As a lake, paving in the morning sky, 325
 With azure waves which burst in silver light,
 Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
 Under the curdling winds, and islanding
 The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
 Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests, 330
 Dim twilight lawns, and stream-illuminated caves,
 And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;
 And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
 From icy spires of sunlike radiance fling
 The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray, 335
 From some Atlantic islet scattered up,
 Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.
 The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
 Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines
 Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast, 340
 Awful as silence. Hark! the rushing snow!
 The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass,
 Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
 Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds 344
 As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
 Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
 Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

PANTHEA

Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
 In crimson foam, even at our feet! it rises
 As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon 350
 Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

ASIA

The fragments of the cloud are scattered up;
 The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair:

Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes ; my brain
Grows dizzy ; I see thin shapes within the mist. 355

PANTHEA

A countenance with beckoning smiles : there burns
An azure fire within its golden locks !
Another and another : hark ! they speak !

SONG OF SPIRITS

To the deep, to the deep,
Down, down ! 360
Through the shade of sleep,
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life ;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are, 365
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down !

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down !
As the fawn draws the hound, 370
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper ;
Death, despair ; love, sorrow ;
Time, both ; to-day, to-morrow ;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone ; 375
Down, down !

Through the gray, void abysm,
Down, down !
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not. 380
And the cavern-crag wear not

The radiance of Heaven
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is one pervading, one alone, —
Down, down!

387

In the depth of the deep,
Down, down!
Like veiled lightning asleep,
Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,
Like a diamond, which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.
Down, down!

390

We have bound thee, we guide thee;
Down, down!
With the bright form beside thee;
Resist not the weakness!
Such strength is in meekness
That the Eternal, the Immortal,
Must unloose through life's portal
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
By that alone.

395

400

SCENE IV. — *The Cave of DEMOGORGON.* ASIA and
PANTHEA.

PANTHEA

What veiled form sits on that ebony throne?

ASIA

The veil has fallen.

PANTHEA

I see a mighty darkness

405

Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
 Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,
 Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,
 Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is
 A living Spirit.

DEMOGORGON

Ask what thou wouldst know. 410

ASIA

What canst thou tell?

DEMOGORGON

All things thou dar'st demand.

ASIA

Who made the living world?

DEMOGORGON

God.

ASIA

Who made all
 That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will,
 Imagination?

DEMOGORGON

God: Almighty God.

ASIA

Who made that sense which, when the winds of spring
 In rarest visitation, or the voice 416
 Of one belovéd heard in youth alone,
 Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim

The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude 420
When it returns no more?

DEMOGORGON

Merciful God.

ASIA

And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,
Which from the links of the great chain of things,
To every thought within the mind of man
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels 425
Under the load towards the pit of death;
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day; 430
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

DEMOGORGON

He reigns.

ASIA

Utter his name: a world pining in pain
Ask but his name: curses shall drag him down.

DEMOGORGON

He reigns.

ASIA

I feel, I know it: who?

DEMOGORGON

He reigns. 434

ASIA

Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth at first,

And Light and Love ; then Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell an envious shadow : such the state
Of the primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has withered them 440
And semivital worms ; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love ; 445
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, " Let man be free,"
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law, to be 450
Omnipotent but friendless, is to reign ;
And Jove now reigned ; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
Fell ; and the unseasonable seasons drove, 455
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves :
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war, 460
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings 465
The shape of Death ; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart ;
And he tamed fire, which, like some beast of prey,

Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath 470
The frown of man; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought, 475
Which is the measure of the universe;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not; and the harmonious mind
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song;
And music lifted up the listening spirit 480
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound;
And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
The human form, till marble grew divine, 485
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.
He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.
He taught the implicated orbits woven 490
Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea.
He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs, 495
The tempest-wingéd chariots of the Ocean,
And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
Were built, and through their snow-like columns
flowed
The warm winds, and the azure ether shone,
And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen. 500
Such, the alleviations of his state,
Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs

Withering in destined pain : but who rains down
 Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
 Man looks on his creation I¹ - God 505
 And sees that it is glorious, - sees him on,
 The wreck of his own will, the corn of earth,
 The outcast, the abandoned, the alone ?
 Not Jove : while yet his frown shook heaven, ay, when
 His adversary from adamant chains 510
 Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
 Who is his master ? Is he too a slave ?

DEMOGORGON

All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil :
 Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

ASIA

Whom calledst thou God ?

DEMOGORGON

I spoke but as ye speak,
 For Jove is the supreme of living things. 516

ASIA

Who is master of the slave ?

DEMOGORGON

If the abysm
 Could vomit forth his secrets. . . . But a voice
 Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless ;
 For what would it avail to bid thee gaze 520
 On the revolving world ? what to bid speak
 Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change ? To these
 All things are subject but eternal Love.

ASIA

So much I asked before, and my heart gave
The response thou hast given : and of such truths 525
Each to itself must be the oracle.
One more demand ; and do thou answer me
As my own soul would answer, did it know
That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world : 530
When shall the destined hour arrive ?

DEMOGORGON

Behold!

ASIA

The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night
I see cars drawn by rainbow-wingéd steeds
Which trample the dim winds : in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight. 535
Some look behind, as fiends pursue them there,
And yet I see no shape, but the keen stars :
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before, 540
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all
Sweep onward.

DEMOGORGON

These are the immortal Hours,
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

ASIA

A spirit with a dreadful countenance 545
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulf.
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak!

SPIRIT

I am the shadow of a destiny
 More dread than is my aspect : ere yon planet 550
 Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
 Shall wrap in lasting night Heaven's kingless throne.

ASIA

What meanest thou?

PANTHEA

That terrible shadow floats
 Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
 Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea. 555
 Lo! it ascends the ear; the coursers fly
 Terrified: watch its path among the stars
 Blackening the night!

ASIA

Thus I am answered : strange!

PANTHEA

See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
 An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire, 560
 Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
 Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
 That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope;
 How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light
 Lures wingéd insects through the lampless air. 565

SPIRIT

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
 They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
 And when the red morning is bright'ning,
 They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
 They have strength for their swiftness I deem, 570
 Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;
 I fear: they outstrip the typhoon;
 Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
 We encircle the earth and the moon: 575
 We shall rest from long labours at noon:
 Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE V. — *The Car pauses within a Cloud on the Top of a snowy Mountain.* ASIA, PANTHEA, and the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

SPIRIT

On the brink of the night and the morning
 My coursers are wont to respire;
 But the Earth has just whispered a warning 580
 That their flight must be swifter than fire:
 They shall drink the hot speed of desire!

ASIA

Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath
 Would give them swifter speed.

SPIRIT

Alas! it could not.

PANTHEA

O Spirit! pause, and tell whence is the light 585
 Which fills the cloud? The sun is yet unrisen.

SPIRIT

The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo
 Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light
 Which fills this vapour, as the aërial hue
 Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water, 590
 Flows from thy mighty sister.

PANTHEA

Yes, I feel —

ASIA

What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale.

PANTHEA

How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;
 I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
 The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change 595
 Is working in the elements, which suffice
 Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell
 That on the day when the clear hyaline
 Was cloven at thy uprise, and thou didst stand
 Within a veined shell, which floated on 600
 Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
 Among the Ægean isles, and by the shores
 Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere
 Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
 Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven 605
 And the deep ocean and the sunless caves,
 And all that dwells within them; till grief cast
 Eclipse upon the soul from which it came.
 Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,
 Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one, 610
 But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
 Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
 Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not
 The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List!

[*Music.*]

ASIA

Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his 615
 Whose echoes they are: yet all love is sweet,
 Given or returned. Common as light is love,
 And its familiar voice wearies not ever.

Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
 It makes the reptile equal to the God : 620
 They who inspire it most are fortunate,
 As I am now ; but those who feel it most
 Are happier still, after long sufferings,
 As I shall soon become.

PANTHEA

List! Spirits speak.

VOICE in the air, singing.

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle 625
 With their love the breath between them ;
 And thy smiles before they dwindle
 Make the cold air fire ; then screen them
 In those looks, where whoso gazes
 Faints, entangled in their mazes. 630

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning
 Through the vest which seems to hide them ;
 As the radiant lines of morning
 Through the clouds ere they divide them ; 635
 And this atmosphere divinest
 Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others ; none beholds thee,
 But thy voice sounds low and tender
 Like the fairest ; for it folds thee
 From the sight, that liquid splendour, 640
 And all feel, yet see thee never,
 As I feel now, lost for ever!

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest
 Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,

And the souls of whom thou lovest 645
 Walk upon the winds with lightness,
 Till they fail, as I am failing,
 Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

ASIA

My soul is an enchanted boat,
 Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float 650
 Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
 And thine doth like an angel sit
 Beside the helm conducting it,
 Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
 It seems to float ever, for ever, 655
 Upon that many-winding river,
 Between mountains, woods, abysses,
 A paradise of wildernesses!
 Till, like one in slumber bound,
 Borne to the ocean, I float down, around, 660
 Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound.

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
 In music's most serene dominions;
 Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
 And we sail on, away, afar, 665
 Without a course, without a star,
 But by the instinct of sweet music driven;
 Till through Elysian garden-islets
 By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
 Where never mortal pinnace glided, 670
 The boat of my desire is guided:
 Realms where the air we breathe is love,
 Which in the winds and on the waves doth move,
 Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have passed Age's icy caves, 675
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray :
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day : 680
A paradise of vaulted bowers
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see, 685
And rest, having beheld ; somewhat like thee ;
Which walk upon the sea, and chaunt melodiously !

ACT III

SCENE I. — *Heaven. JUPITER on his Throne ; THETIS
and the other Deities assembled.*

JUPITER

Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
Rejoice ! henceforth I am omnipotent.
All else had been subdued to me ; alone
The soul of man, like unextinguished fire, 5
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach,
and doubt,
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up insurrection, which might make
Our antique empire insecure, though built
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear ; 10
And though my curses through the pendulous air,
Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,
And cling to it ; though under my wrath's night

It climb the crags of life, step after step,
Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet, 15
It yet remains supreme o'er misery,
Aspiring, unrepressed, yet soon to fall:
Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,
That fatal child, the terror of the earth,
Who waits but till the destined hour arrive, 20
Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne
The dreadful might of ever-living limbs
Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,
To redescend, and trample out the spark.

Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede, 25
And let it fill the dædal cups like fire,
And from the flower-inwoven soil divine
Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,
As dew from earth under the twilight stars:
Drink! be the nectar circling through your veins 30
The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,
Till exultation burst in one wide voice
Like music from Elysian winds.

And thou
Ascend beside me, veiled in the light
Of the desire which makes thee one with me, 35
Thetis, bright image of eternity!
When thou didst cry, "Insufferable might!
God! spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,
The penetrating presence; all my being,
Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw 40
Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,
Sinking through its foundations:" even then
Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third
Mightier than either. which, unbodied now,
Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld, 45

Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,
(Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels
(Grinding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne.
Victory! victory! Feel'st thou not, O world,
The earthquake of his chariot thundering up 50
Olympus?

[*The Car of the HOUR arrives. DEMOGOR-
GON descends, and moves towards the
Throne of JUPITER.*

Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

DEMOGORGON

Eternity. Demand no direr name!
Descend, and follow me down the abyss!
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;
Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together 55
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not!
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee:
Yet, if thou wilt, as 't is the destiny
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead, 60
Put forth thy might!

JUPITER

Detested prodigy!
Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons
I trample thee! Thou lingerest?

Mercy! mercy!

No pity, no release, no respite! Oh,
That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge, 65
Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,
On Caucasus! he would not doom me thus.
Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
The monarch of the world? What then art thou?
No refuge! no appeal!

Sink with me then, 70
 We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
 Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
 Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
 Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock
 Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire, 75
 And whelm on them into the bottomless void
 This desolated world, and thee, and me,
 The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
 Of that for which they combated !

Ai! Ai!
 The elements obey me not. I sink 80
 Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down.
 And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
 Darkens my fall with victory! Ai! Ai!

SCENE II. — *The Mouth of a great River in the Island
 Atlantis. OCEAN is discovered reclining near the
 Shore; APOLLO stands beside him.*

OCEAN
 He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown?

APOLLO
 Ay, when the strife was ended which made dim 85
 The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
 The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
 With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts
 Of the victorious darkness, as he fell:
 Like the last glare of day's red agony, 90
 Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
 Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

OCEAN
 He sunk to the abyss? to the dark void?

APOLLO

An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings 95
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the aërial ice clings over it. 100

OCEAN

Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting sea
Which are my realm, will heave, unstained with blood,
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn
Swayed by the summer air : my streams will flow
Round many-peopled continents, and round 105
Fortunate isles ; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see
The floating bark of the light-laden moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest, 110
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea ;
Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,
And desolation, and the mingled voice
Of slavery and command ; but by the light
Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours, 115
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,
That sweetest music, such as spirits love.

APOLLO

And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse
Darkens the sphere I guide : but list, I hear 120
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit
That sits i' the morning star.



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OCEAN

Thou must away ;
 Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell:
 The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it
 With azure calm out of the emerald urns 125
 Which stand for ever full beside my throne.
 Behold the Nereids under the green sea,
 Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream,
 Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair
 With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns, 130
 Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.
 [*A sound of waves is heard.*]
 It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.
 Peace, monster ; I come now. Farewell.

APOLLO

Farewell.

SCENE III. — *Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE,
the EARTH, SPIRITS, ASIA, and PANTHEA, borne in the
Car with the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

HERCULES *unbinds* PROMETHEUS, *who descends.*

HERCULES

Most glorious among spirits ! thus doth strength
 To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love, 135
 And thee, who art the form they animate,
 Minister like a slave.

PROMETHEUS

Thy gentle words
 Are sweeter even than freedom long desired
 And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,
 Shadow of beauty unbeheld ; and ye, 140

Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, through your love and care :
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave,
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants 149
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears,
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light : 150
And there is heard the ever-moving air,
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees ; and all around are mossy seats,
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass ;
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own ; 155
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability ?
And if ye sigh, then I will smile ; and thou,
Ione, shalt chaunt fragments of sea-music, 160
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things, 165
Like human babes in their brief innocence ;
And we will search, with looks and words of love,
For hidden thoughts each lovelier than the last,
Our unexhausted spirits ; and like lutes
Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind, 170
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
From difference sweet where discord cannot be ;
And hither come, sped on the charmed winds
Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees

From every flower aërial Enna feeds, 175
 At their own island-homes in Himera,
 The echoes of the human world, which tell
 Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,
 And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
 Itself the echo of the heart, and all 180
 That tempers or improves man's life, now free ;
 And lovely apparitions, dim at first,
 Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright
 From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms
 Of which these are the phantoms, casts on them 185
 The gathered rays which are reality,
 Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
 Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,
 And arts, though unimagined, yet to be.
 The wandering voices and the shadows these 190
 Of all that man becomes, the mediators
 Of that best worship, love, by him and us
 Given and returned ; swift shapes and sounds, which
 grow
 More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
 And, veil by veil, evil and error fall : 195
 Such virtue has the cave and place around.

[Turning to the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.]

For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,
 Give her that curv'd shell, which Proteus old
 Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it
 A voice to be accomplished, and which thou 200
 Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

IONE

Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely
 Than all thy sisters, this [is] the mystic shell.
 See the pale azure fading into silver

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

113

Lining it with a soft yet glowing light : 205
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?

SPIRIT

It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean :
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

PROMETHEUS

Go, borne over the cities of mankind
On whirlwind-footed coursers : once again 210
Outspeed the sun around the orbéd world ;
And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,
Thou breathe into the many-folded shell,
Loosening its mighty music ; it shall be
As thunder mingled with clear echoes : then 215
Return ; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.

And thou, O Mother Earth !—

THE EARTH

I hear, I feel ;

Thy lips are on me, and thy touch runs down
Even to the adamantine central gloom
Along these marble nerves ; 't is life, 't is joy, 220
And through my withered, old, and icy frame
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down
Circling. Henceforth the many children fair
Folded in my sustaining arms : all plants,
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged, 225
And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,
Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,
Draining the poison of despair, shall take
And interchange sweet nutriment ; to me
Shall they become like sister-antelopes 230

By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind,
 Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.
 The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float
 Under the stars like balm : night-folded flowers
 Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose : 235
 And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
 Strength for the coming day, and all its joy :
 And death shall be the last embrace of her
 Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother,
 Folding her child, says, " Leave me not again ! " 240

ASIA

O mother ! wherefore speak the name of death?
 Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,
 Who die?

THE EARTH

It would avail not to reply :
 Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
 But to the uncommunicating dead. 245
 Death is the veil which those who live call life :
 They sleep, and it is lifted : and meanwhile
 In mild variety the seasons mild
 With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,
 And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night, 250
 And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
 All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
 Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,
 Shall clothe the forests and the fields, ay, even
 The crag-built deserts of the barren deep, 255
 With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.
 And thou ! There is a cavern where my spirit
 Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain
 Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it
 Became mad too, and built a temple there, 260

And spoke, and were oracular, and lured
The erring nations round to mutual war,
And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee ;
Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds
A violet's exhalation, and it fills 265
With a serener light and crimson air,
Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around ;
It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,
And the dark linked ivy tangling wild,
And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms 270
Which star the winds with points of coloured light,
As they rain through them ; and bright golden globes
Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven ;
And through their veined leaves and amber stems
The flowers whose purple and translucent bowls 275
Stand ever mantling with aërial dew,
The drink of spirits: and it circles round,
Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,
Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine. 280
Arise! Appear!

[A SPIRIT rises in the likeness of a winged child.

This is my torch-bearer ;
Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
On eyes from which he kindled it anew
With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward, 285
And guide this company beyond the peak
Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,
Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying, 290
And up the green ravine, across the vale,
Beside the windless and crystalline pool

Where ever lies on unerasing waves
 The image of a temple, built above,
 Distinct with column, arch, and architrave, 295
 And palm-like capital, and overwrought
 And populous most with living imagery,
 Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
 Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.
 It is deserted now, but once it bore 300
 Thy name, Prometheus; there the emulous youths
 Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom
 The lamp which was thine emblem; even as those
 Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
 Into the grave, across the night of life, 305
 As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
 To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.
 Beside that temple is the destined cave.

SCENE IV. — *A Forest. In the Background a Cave.*
 PROMETHEUS, ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, and the SPIRIT
 OF THE EARTH.

IONE

Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides
 Under the leaves! how on its head there burns 310
 A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
 Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,
 The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass!
 Knowest thou it?

PANTHEA

It is the delicate spirit
 That guides the earth through heaven. From afar 315
 The populous constellations call that light
 The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes
 It floats along the spray of the salt sea,
 Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,

Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep, 320
Or o'er the mountain-tops, or down the rivers,
Or through the green waste wilderness, as now,
Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned
It loved our sister Asia, and it came
Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light 325
Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
As one bit by a dipsas, and with her
It made its childish confidence, and told her
All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her, 330
For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I,
Mother, dear mother.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH (*running to ASIA*)

Mother, dearest mother;
May I then talk with thee as I was wont?
May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,
After thy looks have made them tired of joy? 335
May I then play beside thee the long noons,
When work is none in the bright silent air?

ASIA

I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth
Can cherish thee unenvied; speak, I pray:
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights. 340

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH

Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child
Cannot be wise like thee, within this day;
And happier too; happier and wiser both.
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly
worms,
And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs 345

That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world :
And that, among the haunts of humankind,
Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles, 350
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man ;
And women too, ugliest of all things evil,
(Though fair, even in a world where thou art fair, 355
When good and kind, free and sincere like thee,)
When false or frowning made me sick at heart
To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen.
Well, my path lately lay through a great city
Into the woody hills surrounding it : 360
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate :
When there was heard a sound, so loud it shook
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all ;
A long, long sound, as it would never end : 365
And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
Looking in wonder up to heaven, while yet
The music pealed along. I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square, 370
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves ; and soon
Those ugly human shapes and visages
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Past floating through the air, and fading still 375
Into the winds that scattered them ; and those
From whom they past seemed mild and lovely forms
After some foul disguise had fallen, and all
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise

And greetings of delighted wonder, all 380
Went to their sleep again : and when the dawn
Came, wouldst thou think that toads, and snakes, and
efts,

350 Could e'er be beautiful ? yet so they were,
And that with little change of shape or hue :
All things had put their evil nature off : 385
I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake
Upon a drooping bough with nightshade twined,
355 I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay 390
Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky ;
So with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
360 We meet again, the happiest change of all.

ASIA

And never will we part, till thy chaste sister
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon, 395
Will look on thy more warm and equal light
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow,
And love thee.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH

What ! as Asia loves Prometheus ?

ASIA

Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough.
Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes 400
To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
With spheréd fires the interlunar air ?

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH

Nay, mother, while my sister trims her lamp
'Tis hard I should go darkling.

ASIA

Listen: look!

[*The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR enters*]

PROMETHEUS

We feel what thou hast heard and seen: yet speak! 405

SPIRIT OF THE HOUR

Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder filled
 The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
 There was a change: the impalpable thin air
 And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
 As if the sense of love, dissolved in them, 410
 Had folded itself round the spheréd world.
 My vision then grew clear, and I could see
 Into the mysteries of the universe.
 Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
 Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes, 415
 My coursers sought their birthplace in the sun,
 Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,
 Pasturing [on] flowers of vegetable fire;
 And where my moonlike ear will stand within
 A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms 420
 Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,
 And you fair nymphs, looking the love we feel;
 In memory of the tidings it has borne;
 Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,
 Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone, 425
 And open to the bright and liquid sky.
 Yoked to it by an amphisbænic snake
 The likeness of those wingéd steeds will mock
 The flight from which they find repose. Alas,
 Whither has wandered now my partial tongue, 430
 When all remains untold which ye would hear?

As I have said, I floated to the earth :
It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
To move, to breathe, to be. I wandering went
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind, 435
And first was disappointed not to see
Such mighty change as I had felt within,
Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked,
And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do : 440
None fawned, none trampled ; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,
" All hope abandon ye who enter here ;"
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear 445
Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
Until the subject of a tyrant's will
Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines 450
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak ;
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
The sparks of love and hope till there remained
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among men, 455
Infecting all with his own hideous ill ;
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk
Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes,
Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy
With such a self-mistrust as has no name. 460
And women too, frank, beautiful, and kind
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
On the wide earth, past ; gentle, radiant forms,
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure ;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think, 465

Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
 And changed to all which once they dared not be,
 Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,
 Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill-shame,
 The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall, 470
 Spoil the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgment-seats, and prisons, — wherein,
 And beside which, by wretched men were borne
 Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
 Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance, — 475
 Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
 The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame,
 Which from their unworn obelisks, look forth
 In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
 Of those who were their conquerors, mouldering
 round, 480

Those imaged, to the pride of kings and priests,
 A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide
 As is the world it wasted, and are now
 But an astonishment. Even so the tools
 And emblems of its last captivity, 485
 Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
 Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now;
 And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,
 Which, under many a name and many a form,
 Strange, savage, ghastly, dark, and execrable, 490
 Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;
 And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
 With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and
 love

Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
 And slain among men's unreclaiming tears, 495
 Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,—

Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines.
 The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
 Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,
 All men believed and hoped, is torn aside; 500
 The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains,
 Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man:
 Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
 Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
 Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man. 505
 Passionless? no, yet free from guilt or pain,
 Which were, for his will made or suffered them;
 Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
 From chance, and death, and mutability,
 The clogs of that which else might oversoar 510
 The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
 Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

ACT IV

SCENE. — *A part of the Forest near the Cave of PROMETHEUS. PANTHEA and IONE are sleeping: they awaken gradually during the first Song.*

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS

The pale stars are gone!
 For the sun, their swift shepherd,
 To their folds them compelling,
 In the depths of the dawn,
 Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee 5
 Beyond his blue dwelling,
 As fauns flee the leopard,
 But where are ye?
 [*A train of dark Forms and Shadows passes by*
confusedly, singing.]

Here, oh, here :
 We bear the bier 10
 Of the Father of many a cancelled year!
 Spectres we
 Of the dead Hours be,
 We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew 15
 Hair, not yew!
 Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!
 Be the faded flowers
 Of Death's bare bowers
 Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours!

Haste, oh, haste! 21
 As shades are chased,
 Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste,
 We melt away,
 Like dissolving spray, 25
 From the children of a diviner day,
 With the lullaby
 Of winds that die
 On the bosom of their own harmony!

IONE

What dark forms were they? 30

PANTHEA

The past Hours weak and gray,
 With the spoil which their toil
 Raked together
 From the conquest but One could foil.

IONE

Have they past? 35

PANTHEA

They have past; 35

They outspeeded the blast,
While 't is said, they are fled:

IONE

Whither, oh, whither?

PANTHEA

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS

Bright clouds float in heaven, 40

Dew-stars gleam on earth,

Waves assemble on ocean:

They are gathered and driven

By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!

They shake with emotion, 45

They dance in their mirth.

But where are ye?

The pine-boughs are singing

Old songs with new gladness,

The billows and fountains 50

Fresh music are flinging,

Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea;

The storms mock the mountains

With the thunder of gladness.

But where are ye? 55

IONE

What charioteers are these?

PANTHEA

Where are their chariots?

SEMICHORUS OF HOURS

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
 Has drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
 Which covered our being and darkened our birth
 In the deep.

A VOICE

In the deep?

SEMICHORUS II

Oh, below the deep.

SEMICHORUS I

An hundred ages we had been kept
 Cradled in visions of hate and care,
 And each one who waked as his brother slept,
 Found the truth —

61

SEMICHORUS II

Worse than his visions were !

SEMICHORUS I

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep ;
 We have known the voice of Love in dreams ;
 We have felt the wand of Power, and leap —

65

SEMICHORUS II

As the billows leap in the morning beams !

CHORUS

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
 Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
 Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
 To check its flight ere the cave of night.

70

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
 Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
 And it limped and stumbled with many wounds 75
 Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
 Of music, and dance, and shapes of light;
 Let the Hours, and the spirits of night and pleasure,
 Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite! 80

A VOICE

Unite!

PANTHEA

See, where the Spirits of the human mind,
 Wrapt in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

We join the throng
 Of the dance and the song,
 By the whirlwind of gladness borne along; 85
 As the flying-fish leap
 From the Indian deep,
 And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

CHORUS OF HOURS

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet? —
 For sandals of lightning are on your feet, 90
 And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
 And your eyes are as love which is veiled not.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

We come from the mind
 Of humankind,
 Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind; 95

Now 't is an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss, 100
Whose caverns are crystal palaces ;
From those skyey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours !

From the dim recesses 105
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses ;
From the azure isles,
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her siren wiles. 110

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy ;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs 115
Where Science bedews his dædal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears, 120
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandalled with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm ; 125

And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS AND HOURS

Then weave the web of the mystic measure ;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the
earth, 130
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
To an ocean of splendour and harmony !

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

Our spoil is won, 135
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run ;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round. 140

We 'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize :
Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight, 145
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
And the Spirit of Might,
Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight ;
And Love, Thought, and Breath, 150
The powers that quell Death,
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
 In the void's loose field
 A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield ; 155
 We will take our plan
 From the new world of man,
 And our work shall be called the Promethean.

CHORUS OF HOURS

Break the dance, and scatter the song;
 Let some depart, and some remain. 160

SEMICHORUS I

We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

SEMICHORUS II

Us the enchantments of earth retain:

SEMICHORUS I

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
 With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,
 And a heaven where yet heaven could never be. 165

SEMICHORUS II

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
 Leading the Day, and outspeeding the Night,
 With the powers of a world of perfect light.

SEMICHORUS I

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
 Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
 From its chaos made calm by love, not fear. 171

SEMICHORUS II

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,

And the happy forms of its death and birth
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

CHORUS OF HOURS AND SPIRITS

Break the dance, and scatter the song, 175
Let some depart, and some remain;
Wherever we fly we lead along
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

PANTHEA

Ha! they are gone!

IONE

Yet feel you no delight 180
From the past sweetness?

PANTHEA

As the bare green hill,
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
To the unpavilioned sky!

IONE

Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound? 185

PANTHEA

'T is the deep music of the rolling world,
Kindling within the strings of the waved air
Æolian modulations.

IONE

Listen, too,
How every pause is filled with under-notes,

Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones, 190
 Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
 As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air,
 And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

PANTHEA

But see where, through two openings in the forest
 Which hanging branches overcanopy, 195
 And where two runnels of a rivulet
 Between the close moss, violet-inwoven,
 Have made their path of melody, like sisters
 Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
 Turning their dear disunion to an isle 200
 Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts;
 Two visions of strange radiance float upon
 The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
 Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet,
 Under the ground and through the windless air. 205

IONE

I see a chariot like that thinnest boat
 In which the mother of the months is borne
 By ebbing night into her western cave,
 When she upsprings from interlunar dreams;
 O'er which is curved an orblike canopy 210
 Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods
 Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,
 Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;
 Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
 Such as the genii of the thunderstorm 215
 Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
 When the sun rushes under it; they roll
 And move and grow as with an inward wind;
 Within it sits a wingéd infant, white

Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow, 220
 Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,
 Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
 Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl.
 Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
 Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens 225
 Of liquid darkness, which the deity
 Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured
 From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,
 Tempering the cold and radiant air around,
 With fire that is not brightness; in its hand 230
 It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point
 A guiding power directs the chariot's prow
 Over its wheeléd clouds, which as they roll
 Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,
 Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew. 235

PANTHEA

I from the other opening in the wood
 Shes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
 A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,
 Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass
 Flow, as through empty space, music and light: 240
 Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
 Purple and azure, white, green, and golden,
 Sphere within sphere, and every space between
 Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
 Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep, 245
 Yet each intertranspicuous, and they whirl
 Over each other with a thousand motions,
 Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning.
 And with the force of self-destroying swiftmess,
 Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on, 250
 Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,

Intelligible words and music wild,
 With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
 Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
 Of elemental subtlety, like light; 255
 And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
 The music of the living grass and air,
 The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams,
 Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed
 Seem kneaded into one aërial mass 260
 Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
 Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
 Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
 On its own folded wings and wavy hair,
 The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep, 265
 And you can see its little lips are moving,
 Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
 Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

IONE

'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

PANTHEA

And from a star upon its forehead, shoot, 270
 Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
 With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,
 Embleming heaven and earth united now,
 Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel 274
 Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
 Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,
 And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
 Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,
 Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;
 Infinite mine of adamant and gold, 280
 Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,

And caverns on crystalline columns poised
 With vegetable silver overspread;
 Wells of unfathomed fire, and water-springs
 Whence the great sea even as a child is fed, 285
 Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
 With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on,
 And make appear the melancholy ruins
 Of cancelled cycles: anchors, beaks of ships;
 Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears, 291
 And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
 Of scythéd chariots, and the emblazonry
 Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
 Round which Death laughed, sepulchred emblems
 Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin! 295
 The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
 Whose population which the earth grew over
 Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie,
 Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
 Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes 300
 Huddled in gray annihilation, split,
 Jammed in the hard, black deep; and, over these,
 The anatomies of unknown wingéd things,
 And fishes which were isles of living scale,
 And serpents, bony chains, twisted around 305
 The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
 To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
 Had crushed the iron crags; and over these
 The jagged alligator, and the might
 Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once 310
 Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
 And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
 Increased and multiplied like summer worms
 On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
 Wrapt deluge round it like a cloke, and they 315

Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God
Whose throne was in a comet, past, and cried,
Be not! And like my words they were no more.

THE EARTH

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness, 320
The vaporous exultation not to be confined!
Ha! ha! the animation of delight
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind!

THE MOON

Brother mine, calm wanderer, 325
Happy globe of land and air,
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odour, and deep melody 330
Through me, through me!

THE EARTH

Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains,
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses, 335
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing
after.

They cry aloud as I do: Sceptred curse,
Who all our green and azure universe
Threatenest to muffle round with black destruction,
sending 340

A solid cloud to rain hot thunder-stones,
And splinter and knead down my children's bones,
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and
blending;

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn, 345
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow,
and fire;

My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom
Which find a grave or cradle in my bosom,
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire.

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk
up 350

By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all;
And from beneath, around, within, above,
Filling thy void annihilation, love
Bursts in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-
ball! 355

THE MOON

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine:
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth 360
My cold bare bosom: Oh, it must be thine
On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee, I feel, I know,
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers
grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move: 365

Music is in the sea and air,
 Wingéd clouds soar here and there,
 Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:
 'T is love, all love !

THE EARTH

It interpenetrates my granite mass, 376
 Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass,
 Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers ;
 Upon the winds, among the clouds 't is spread :
 It wakes a life in the forgotten dead, —
 They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers.

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison 376
 With thunder and with whirlwind, has arisen
 Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being :
 With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
 Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever, 380
 Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows,
 fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,
 Which could distort to many a shade of error,
 This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love ;
 Which over all his kind as the sun's heaven 385
 Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even
 Darting from starry depths radiance and life, doth
 move :

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left,
 Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
 Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs
 is poured, — 390
 Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,

Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored :

Man, oh, not men ! a chain of linkéd thought,
Of love and might to be divided not, 395
Compelling the elements with adamantine stress ;
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free
wilderness:

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul, 400
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea ;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love ;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they
could be ! 405

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-wingéd ship, whose helm
Love rules through waves which dare not over-
whelm, 410
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign
sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold
mass
Of marble and of colour his dreams pass ;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their
children wear ;
Language is a perpetual orphic song, 415

Which rules with dædal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shape-
less were.

The lightning is his slave ; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on ! 420
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air ;
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets ? Man unveils me ; I have
none.

THE MOON

The shadow of white death has past
From my path in heaven at last, 425
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep ;
And through my newly-woven bowers,
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep. 430

THE EARTH

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half infrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a wingéd mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray 435
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

THE MOON

Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine ;
All suns and constellations shower 440

On thee a light, a life, a power
Which doth array thy spear ; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine !

THE EARTH

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens, dreaming delight, 445
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep ;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth
doth keep.

THE MOON

As in the soft and sweet eclipse, 450
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are
dull ;
So when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee
Covered ; of thy love, Orb most beautiful, 455
Full, oh, too full !

Thou art speeding round the sun,
Brightest world of many a one ;
Green and azure sphere which shinest
With a light which is divinest 460
Among all the lamps of heaven
To whom life and light is given.
I, thy crystal paramour,
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar paradise, 465
Magnet-like, of lovers' eyes ;
I, a most enamoured maiden
Whose weak brain is overladen

With the pleasure of her love,
 Maniac-like around thee move 470
 Gazing, an insatiate bride,
 On thy form from every side
 Like a Mænad, round the cup
 Which Agave lifted up
 In the weird Cadmean forests. 475
 Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
 I must hurry, whirl and follow
 Through the heavens wide and hollow,
 Sheltered by the warm embrace
 Of thy soul from hungry space, 480
 Drinking from thy sense and sight
 Beauty, majesty, and might,
 As a lover or cameleon
 Grows like what it looks upon ;
 As a violet's gentle eye 485
 Gazes on the azure sky
 Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
 As a gray and watery mist
 Glows like solid amethyst
 Athwart the western mountain it enfolds, 490
 When the sunset sleeps
 Upon its snow.

THE EARTH

And the weak day weeps
 That it should be so.
 O gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight 495
 Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
 Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night
 Through isles for ever calm ;
 O gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
 The caverns of my pride's deep universe, 500

Charming the tiger joy, whose tramlings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balin.

PANTHEA

I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
Out of the stream of sound.

IONE

Ah me! sweet sister, 505

The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

PANTHEA

Peace! peace! A mighty Power, which is as dark-
ness, 510

Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
Is showered like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone, 515
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

IONE

There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

PANTHEA

An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

DEMOGORGON

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies, 520

Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies:

THE EARTH

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

DEMOGORGON

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee; 525
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift
birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

THE MOON

I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!

DEMOGORGON

Ye kings of suns and stars! Dæmons and Gods,
Æthereal Dominations! who possess 530
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:

A VOICE FROM ABOVE

Our great Republic hears; we are blest, and bless.

DEMOGORGON

Ye happy dead! whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray, 535
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered —

A VOICE FROM BENEATH

Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

DEMOGORGON

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone 540
Of sullen lead; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

A CONFUSED VOICE

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

DEMOGORGON

Spirits, whose homes are flesh: ye beasts and birds,
Ye worms, and fish; ye living leaves and buds; 545
Lightning and wind; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:

A VOICE

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

DEMOGORGON

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave;
A dupe and a deceiver; a decay; 550
A traveller from the cradle to the grave
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

ALL

Speak! thy strong words may never pass away.

DEMOGORGON

This is the day, which down the void abysm
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despot-
ism, 555
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour

Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs 560
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity, 565
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length,
These are the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite; 570
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent; 575
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!

560

565

ngth,

570

575

1820.

1820.

GOOD NIGHT

GOOD NIGHT? ah, no; the hour is ill
 Which severs those it should unite;
 Let us remain together still,
 Then it will be *good* night.

How can I call the lone night good, 5
 Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight?
 Be it not said, thought, understood,
 Then it will be *good* night.

To hearts which near each other move
 From evening close to morning light 10
 The night is good; because, my love,
 They never *say* good night.

1820.

SONG

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,
 Spirit of Delight!
 Wherefore hast thou left me now
 Many a day and night?
 Many a weary night and day 5
 'T is since thou art fled away.

How shall ever one like me
 Win thee back again?
 With the joyous and the free
 Thou wilt scoff at pain. 10
 Spirit false! thou hast forgot
 All but those who need thee not.

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismayed ; 15
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

5 Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure : 20
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure ;
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

10 I love all that thou lovest, 25
Spirit of Delight !
The fresh Earth in new leaves drest,
And the starry night ;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born. 30

I love snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost ;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
Everything almost
Which is Nature's, and may be 35
Untainted by man's misery.

I love tranquil solitude,
And such society
As is quiet, wise, and good ;
Between thee and me 40
What difference ? But thou dost possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

5

10

5

10

I love Love — though he has wings,
 And like light can flee,
 But, above all other things,
 Spirit, I love thee —
 Thou art love and life! O come,
 Make once more my heart thy home!

1820.

45

TO —

I FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden, —
 Thou needest not fear mine;
 My spirit is too deeply laden
 Ever to burthen thine.

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion, — 5
 Thou needest not fear mine;
 Innocent is the heart's devotion
 With which I worship thine.

1820.

SONG OF PROSERPINE

WHILST GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE PLAIN OF ENNA

SACRED Goddess, Mother Earth,
 Thou from whose immortal bosom
 Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,
 Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,
 Breathe thine influence most divine
 On thine own child, Proserpine.

If with mists of evening dew
 Thou dost nourish these young flowers

45 Till they grow, in scent and hue
 Fairest children of the Hours, 10
 Breathe thine influence most divine
 On thine own child, Proserpine.
 1820.

AUTUMN

A DIRGE

THE warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
 The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying;
 And the year
 On the earth, her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
 Is lying. 5

— 5 Come, months, come away,
 From November to May,
 In your saddest array;
 Follow the bier
 Of the dead cold year, 10
 And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

NA The chill rain is falling, the nipped worm is crawling,
 The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
 For the year;
 The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each
 gone 15

 To his dwelling.
 Come, months, come away;
 Put on white, black, and gray;
 Let your light sisters play —
 Ye, follow the bier 20
 Of the dead cold year,
 And make her grave green with tear on tear.

1820.

THE QUESTION

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
Bare winter suddenly was changed to spring,
And gentle odours led my steps astray,
Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay 5
Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets ;
Daisies, those pearly Arcturi of the earth ; 10
The constellated flower that never sets ;
Faint oxlips ; tender bluebells, at whose birth
The sod scarce heaved ; and that tall flower that wets —
Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth —
Its mother's face with heaven-collected tears. 15
When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured may,
And cherry-olossoms, and white cups, whose wine
Was the bright dew yet drained not by the Day ; 20
And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray ;
And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

And nearer to the river's trembling edge 25
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with
white ;
And starry river-buds among the sedge ;
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,

Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light ; 30
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers 35
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
Within my hand, — and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it! — O, to whom? 40

1820.

HYMN OF APOLLO

THE sleepless Hours who watch me, as I lie
Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries
From the broad moonlight of the sky,
Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes, —
Waken me when their Mother, the gray Dawn, 5
Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
I walk over the mountains and the waves,
Leaving my robe upon the ocean-foam ;
My footsteps pave the clouds with fire ; the caves 10
Are filled with my bright presence ; and the air
Leaves the green earth to my embraces bare.

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day ;
All men who do or even imagine ill 15
Fly me, and from the glory of my ray

Good minds and open actions take new might,
Until diminished by the reign of night.

I feed the clouds, the rainbows, and the flowers,
With their aethereal colours : the Moon's globe 20
And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
Are cinctured with my power as with a robe ;
Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine
Are portions of one power, which is mine.

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven ; 25
Then with unwilling steps I wander down
Into the clouds of the Atlantic even ;
For grief that I depart they weep and frown :
What look is more delightful than the smile
With which I soothe them from the western isle? 30

I am the eye with which the universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine ;
All harmony of instrument or verse,
All prophecy, all medicine, are mine,
All light of art or nature ; — to my song 35
Victory and praise in their own right belong.
1820.

HYMN OF PAN

From the forests and highlands
We come, we come :
From the river-girt islands,
Where loud waves are dumb
Listening to my sweet pipings. 5
The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
The bees on the bells of thyme,

The birds on the myrtle-bushes,
 The cicale above in the lime,
 And the lizards below in the grass, 10
 Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
 Listening to my sweet pipings.

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
 And all dark Tempe lay
 In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing 15
 The light of the dying day,
 Speeded by my sweet pipings.
 The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
 And the Nymphs of the woods and waves,
 To the edge of the moist river-lawns, 20
 And the brink of the dewy caves,
 And all that did then attend and follow,
 Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo,
 With envy of my sweet pipings.

I sang of the dancing stars, 25
 I sang of the dædal Earth,
 And of Heaven — and the giant wars,
 And Love, and Death, and Birth ; —
 And then I changed my pipings, —
 Singing how down the vale of Mænalus 30
 I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed :
 Gods and men, we are all deluded thus !
 It breaks in our bosom, and then we bleed :
 All wept, as I think both ye now would,
 If envy or age had not frozen your blood, 35
 At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

ARETHUSA

ARETHUSA arose
 From her couch of snows
 In the Acroceraunian mountains, —
 From clod and from crag,
 With many a jag, 5
 Shepherding her bright fountains.
 She leapt down the rocks,
 With her rainbow locks
 Streaming among the streams ;
 Her steps paved with green 10
 The downward ravine
 Which slopes to the western gleams :
 And gliding and springing,
 She went, ever singing
 In murmurs as soft as sleep. 15
 The Earth seemed to love her,
 And Heaven smiled above her,
 As she lingered towards the deep.

 Then Alpheus bold,
 On his glacier cold, 20
 With his trident the mountains strook ;
 And opened a chasm
 In the rocks ; — with the spasm
 All Erymanthus shook.
 And the black south wind 25
 It concealed behind
 The urns of the silent snow,
 And earthquake and thunder
 Did render in sunder
 The bars of the springs below : 30
 The beard and the hair
 Of the river-god were

Seen through the torrent's sweep,
As he followed the light
Of the fleet nymph's flight 35
To the brink of the Dorian deep.

5 "O save me! O guide me,
And bid the deep hide me,
For he grasps me now by the hair!"
The loud Ocean heard, 40
To its blue depth stirred,
And divided at her prayer;
And under the water
The Earth's white daughter
10 Fled like a sunny beam; 45
Behind her descended
Her billows, unblended
With the brackish Dorian stream:
Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main 50
Alpheus rushed behind, —
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin
20 Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

Under the bowers 55
Where the Ocean Powers
Sit on their pearléd thrones;
Through the coral woods
Of the weltering floods;
25 Over heaps of unvalued stones; 60
Through the dim beams
Which amid the streams
Weave a network of coloured light;
And under the caves
30 Where the shadowy waves 65

Are as green as the forest's night:
 Outspeeding the shark,
 And the sword-fish dark,
 Under the ocean foam,
 And up through the rifts 70
 Of the mountain-cliffs
 They passed to their Dorian home.

And now from their fountains
 In Enna's mountains,
 Down one vale where the morning basks, 75
 Like friends once parted
 Grown single-hearted,
 They ply their watery tasks.
 At sunrise they leap
 From their cradles steep 80
 In the cave of the shelving hill;
 At noontide they flow
 Through the woods below,
 And the meadows of asphodel;
 And at night they sleep 85
 In the rocking deep
 Beneath the Ortygian shore; —
 Like spirits that lie
 In the azure sl
 When they love but live no more. 90

1820.

THE CLOUD

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams;
 I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noonday dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dews that waken 5

The sweet buds every one,

When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,

As she dances about the sun.

70

I wield the flail of the lashing hail,

And whiten the green plains under,

10

And then again I dissolve it in rain,

And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,

ks, 75

And their great pines groan aghast ;

And all the night 't is my pillow white,

15

While I sleep in the arms of the blast.

Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,

Lightning my pilot sits ;

80

In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,

It struggles and howls at fits ;

20

Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,

This pilot is guiding me,

Lured by the love of the genii that move

In the depths of the purple sea ;

85

Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,

25

Over the lakes and the plains,

Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,

The Spirit he loves remains ;

90

And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,

Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

30

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,

And his burning plumes outspread,

Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,

When the morning-star shines dead ;

As on the jag of a mountain crag,

35

Which an earthquake rocks and swings,

An eagle alit one moment may sit
 In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe from the lit sea beneath,
 Its ardours of rest and of love, 40
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
 From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
 As still as a brooding dove.

That orbéd maiden, with white fire laden, 45
 Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
 By the midnight breezes strewn ;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
 Which only the angels hear, 50
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
 The stars peep behind her and peer ;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
 Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent, 55
 Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
 Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
 And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ; 60
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
 When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
 Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof, 65
 The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march,
 With hurricane, fire, and snow,

When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
 Is the million-coloured bow : 70
 The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
 While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
 And the nursling of the sky ;
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ; 75
 I change, but I cannot die.
 For after the rain, when with never a stain
 The pavilion of heaven is bare,
 And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,
 Build up the blue dome of air, 80
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
 And out of the caverns of rain,
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
 I arise and unbuild it again.
 1820.

TO A SKYLARK

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit !
 Bird thou never wert,
 That from heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art. 5

Higher still and higher
 From the earth thou springest
 Like a cloud of fire ;
 The blue deep thou wingest, 9
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
 Of the sunken sun,

O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun. 15

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there. 25

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is over-
flowed. 30

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody. 35

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not: 40

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour 44
 With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower :

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its ærial hue
 Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from
 the view : 50

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-wingéd
 thieves. 55

Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers, —
 All that ever was 59
 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, — thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine :
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine. 65

Chorus Hymenæal,
 Or triumphal chaunt,

Matched with thine would be all
 But an empty vaunt, —
 A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want. 70

What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain?
 What fields, or waves, or mountains?
 What shapes of sky or plain? 74
 What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
 Languor cannot be:
 Shadow of annoyance
 Never came near thee:
 Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety. 80

Waking or asleep,
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream, 84
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not:
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught;
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest
 thought. 90

Yet if we could scorn
 Hate, and pride, and fear;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever should come near. 95

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground! 100

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now. 105
1820.

ODE TO LIBERTY

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind. — BYRON.

I

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations: Liberty,
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay, 5
And, in the rapid plumes of song,
Clothed itself, sublime and strong;
As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,
Hovering inverse o'er its accustomed prey;
Till from its station in the heaven of fame 10
The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void, was from behind it flung,
As foam from a ship's swiftness; when there
came
A voice out of the deep: I will record the same. —

II

"The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth ; 16
 The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
 Into the depths of heaven. The dædal earth,
 That island in the ocean of the world,
 Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air ; 20
 But this divinest universe
 Was yet a chaos and a curse,
 For thou wert not : but power from worst producing
 worse,
 The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
 And of the birds, and of the watery forms, 25
 And there was war among them, and despair
 Within them, raging without truce or terms :
 The bosom of their violated nurse
 Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms
 on worms,
 And men on men ; each heart was as a hell of
 storms. 30

III

"Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
 His generations under the pavilion
 Of the Sun's throne : palace and pyramid,
 Temple and prison, to many a swarming million
 Were as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves. 35
 This human living multitude
 Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
 For thou wert not ; but o'er the populous solitude,
 Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
 Hung tyranny ; beneath, sate deified 40
 The sister-pest, congregator of slaves ;
 Into the shadow of her pinions wide,

Anarchs and priests, who feed on gold and blood,
Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed, 44
Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

IV

"The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
Of Greece basked glorious in the open smiles
Of favouring heaven; from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody 50
On the unapprehensive wild.
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew, savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is to be, 56
Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child,
Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Ægean
main 60

V

"Athens arose: a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it; 65
Its portals are inhabited
By thunder-zonéd winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,
A divine work! Athens diviner yet
Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will 70
Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill

Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead
 In marble immortality, that hill
 Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

VI

“ Within the surface of Time’s fleeting river 76
 Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
 Immovably unquiet, and for ever
 It trembles, but it cannot pass away !
 The voices of thy bards and sages thunder 80
 With an earth-awakening blast
 Through the caverns of the past ;
 Religion veils her eyes ; Oppression sinks aghast :
 A wingéd sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
 Which soars where expectation never flew, 85
 Rending the veil of space and time asunder !
 One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew ;
 One sun illumines heaven ; one spirit vast
 With life and love makes chaos ever new, — 89
 As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

VII

“ Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
 Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmæan Mænad,
 She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
 From that elysian food was yet unweanéd ;
 And many a deed of terrible uprightness 95
 By thy sweet love was sanctified ;
 And in thy smile, and by thy side,
 Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
 But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
 And gold profaned thy capitolian throne, 100
 Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingéd lightness,
 The senate of the tyrants : they sunk prone

Slaves of one tyrant. Palatinus sighed
Faint echoes of Ionian song: that tone
Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown. 105

VIII

“From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
Or utmost islet inaccessible,
Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks, 110
And every Naiad’s ice-cold urn,
To talk in echoes sad and stern,
Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn?
For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
Of the Scald’s dreams, nor haunt the Druid’s
sleep. 115
What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks
Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not
weep,
When from its sea of death to kill and burn,
The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

IX

“A thousand years the Earth cried, Where art thou?
And then the shadow of thy coming fell
On Saxon Alfred’s olive-cinctured brow:
And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep, 125
Arose in sacred Italy,
Frowning o’er the tempestuous sea
Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned
majesty;
That multitudinous anarchy did sweep
And burst around their walls like idle foam, 130

Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep,
 Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
 Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
 With divine wand traced on our earthly home
 Fit imagery to pave heaven's everlasting dome. 135

X

"Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror
 Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,
 Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingéd Error,
 As light may pierce the clouds when they dis sever
 In the calm regions of the orient day! 140

Luther caught thy wakening glance:
 Like lightning from his leaden lance
 Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
 In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay; 144
 And England's prophets hailed thee as their
 queen,

In songs whose music cannot pass away,
 Though it must flow for ever: not unseen
 Before the spirit-sighted countenance
 Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene 149
 Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

XI

"The eager hours and unreluctant years
 As on a dawn-illuminated mountain stood,
 Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
 Darkening each other with their multitude,
 And cried aloud, Liberty! Indignation 155
 Answered Pity from her cave;
 Death grew pale within the grave,
 And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!
 When, like heaven's sun girt by the exhalation

ODE TO LIBERTY

171

Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise, 160
Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation

Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes. 165

XII

"Thou heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee
then,

In ominous eclipse? A thousand years,
Bred from the slime of deep oppression's den,
Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away; 170

How like Bacchanals of blood,
Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood!

When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers, 175

Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred
bowers

Of serene heaven. He, by the past pursued,
Rests with those dead but unforgotten hours,
Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral
towers. 180

XIII

"England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?
Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
Vesuvius wakens Ætna, and the cold

Snow-crag by its reply are cloven in sunder:
O'er the lit waves every Æolian isle 185
From Pithecusa to Pelorus
Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus:

They cry, Be dim, ye lamps of heaven suspended
o'er us!

Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of
steel,

Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file. 191

Twins of a single destiny! appeal
To the eternal years enthroned before us,
In the dim West, impress us from a seal,
All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare
conceal. 195

XIV

"Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead,
Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
His soul may stream over the tyrant's head!

Thy victory shall be his epitaph!
Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine, 200
King-deluded Germany,
His dead spirit lives in thee.

Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!
And thou, lost paradise of this divine
And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness! 205

Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
Where desolation, clothed with loveliness,
Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress 209
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces!

XV

"O that the free would stamp the impious name
Of KING into the dust; or write it there,
So that this blot upon the page of fame
Were as a serpent's path, which the light air

ODE TO LIBERTY

173

Erases, and the flat sands close behind! 215
 Ye the oracle have heard:
 Lift the victory-flashing sword,
 And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,
 Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
 Into a mass, irrefragably firm 220
 The axes and the rods which awe mankind;
 The sound has poison in it; 't is the sperm
 Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred;
 Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term, 225
 To set thine arméd heel on this reluctant worm.

XVI

"O that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
 Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
 That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and
 dwindle
 Into the hell from which it first was hurled,
 A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure; 230
 Till human thoughts might kneel alone,
 Each before the judgment-throne
 Of its own aweless soul, or of the power unknown!
 O that the words which make the thoughts obscure
 From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering
 dew 235
 From a white lake blot heaven's blue portraiture,
 Were stript of their thin masks and various
 hue,
 And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
 Till in the nakedness of false and true
 They stand before their Lord, each to receive its
 due! 240

XVII

"He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
 Can be between the cradle and the grave,
 Crowned him the King of Life. O vain endeavour!
 If on his own high will, a willing slave, 244
 He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor!
 What if earth can clothe and feed
 Amplest millions at their need,
 And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?
 Or what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
 Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne, 250
 Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
 And cries, Give me, thy child, dominion
 Over all height and depth! if Life can breed
 New wants, and wealth from those who toil and
 groan, 254
 Rend, of thy gifts and hers, a thousandfold for
 one!

XVIII

"Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
 Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
 Beckons the sun from the Eoan wave,
 Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
 Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame; 260
 Comes she not, and come ye not,
 Rulers of eternal thought,
 To judge with solemn truth life's ill-apportioned
 lot, —
 Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
 Of what has been, the Hope of what will be? 265
 O, Liberty! if such could be thy name
 Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from
 thee;

If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
Wept tears, and blood like tears?" — The solemn
harmony 270

XIX

Paused, and the spirit of that mighty singing
To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn ;
Then as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
Sinks headlong through the ærial golden light 275
On the heavy-sounding plain,
When the bolt has pierced its brain ;
As summer clouds dissolve, unburdened of their rain ;
As a far taper fades with fading night ;
As a brief insect dies with dying day, — 280
My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
Drooped ; o'er it closed the echoes far away
Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
As waves which lately paved his watery way
Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous
play. 285

1820.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

PART I

A SENSITIVE PLANT in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair, 5
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere ;

And each flower and herb on earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness, 10
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet
want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet, 14
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour,
sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess
Till they die of their own dear loveliness, 20

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth, purple, and white, and blue, 25
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addrest, 29
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare;

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Maenad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye, 35
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky ;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose —
The sweetest flower for scent that blows —
And all rare blossoms from every clime,
Grew in that garden in perfect prime. 40

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom,
With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously, 45
And starry river-buds glimmered by,
And around them the soft stream did glide and
dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across, 50
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells,
As fair as the famous asphodels,
And flow'rets which, drooping as day drooped too, 55
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes

Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet 60
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun ; 65

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear
Wrapt and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant, which could give small
fruit 70
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver ;

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower :
Radiance and odour are not its dower ; 75
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full ;
It desires what it has not, the Beautiful !

The light winds, which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings ;
The beams which dart from many a star 80
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar ;

The pluméd insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass ; 85

60 The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears ;

65 The quivering vapours of dim noontide, 90
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream ; —

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear, 95
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

70 And when evening descended from Heaven above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep, 101

75 And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were
drowned
In an ocean of dreams without a sound,
Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness ; 105

80 (Only overhead the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant.)

85 The Sensitive Plant was the earliest 110
Upgathered into the bosom of rest :
A sweet child weary of its delight,

The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of night.

PART II

There was a Power in this sweet place, 115
An Eve in this Eden ; a ruling grace
Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme :

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind, 120
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even :
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth, 125
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth !

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her
eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise : 130

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it prest ; 135
You might hear, by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there, and left passion behind.

And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier bands;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof, —

In a basket, of grasses and wild flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee, and the beamlike ephemeris
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
 Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
 She left clinging round the smooth and dark
 Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

170

This fairest creature from earliest spring
 Thus moved through the garden ministering
 All the sweet season of summer tide,
 And ere the first leaf looked brown — she died !

PART III

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,
 Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,
 Or the waves of Baiae, ere luminous
 She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

175

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
 Felt the sound of the funeral chant,
 And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
 And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low ;

180

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
 And the silent motions of passing death,
 And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
 Sent through the pores of the coffin plank.

185

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
 Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass ;
 From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
 And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

190

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
 Like the corpse of her who had been its soul :
 Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,

Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep. 195

170 Swift summer into the autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow, 200
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
175 Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew, 205
Leaf after leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay.

180 And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind past; 210
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

185 And the gusty winds waked the wingéd seeds
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them. 215

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set,
And the eddies drove them here and there,
190 As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks 220
Were bent and tangled across the walks;

And the leafless network of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin, and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow,
All loathliest weeds began to grow, 225
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank, 230
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew. 235

And agarics and fungi, with mildew and mould,
Started like mist from the wet ground cold;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated!

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake, 240
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake,
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,
Infecting the winds that wander by.

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb, 245
And at its outlet, flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength to kill:

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

185

At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt, 250
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noonday
Unseen; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit. 255

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon 260
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore,
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came: The wind was his whip;
One choppy finger was on his lip; 265
He had torn the cataracts from the hills,
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound;
He came, fiercely driven in his chariot-throne 270
By the tenfold blasts of the Arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath;
Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost! 275

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want:

The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air,
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain 280
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again ;
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew ;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out, 285
Shook the boughs, thus laden, and heavy and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When winter had gone and spring came back,
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck ;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and
 darnels, 290
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

CONCLUSION

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a spirit sat
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say. 295

Whether that lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light,
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess : but in this life 300
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR

187

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant, if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

305

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never past away :
'T is we, 't is ours, are changed ; not they.

310

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change ; their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

315

1820.

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR

ORPHAN hours, the year is dead,
Come and sigh, come and weep !
Merry hours, smile instead,
For the year is but asleep :
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.

5

As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So white Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the death-cold year to-day ;
Solemn hours ! wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

10

As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-sprung cradle of a child,

So the breath of these rude days 15
 Rocks the year: — be calm and mild,
 Trembling hours; she will arise
 With new love within her eyes.

January gray is here,
 Like a sexton by her grave; 20
 February bears the bier,
 March with grief doth howl and rave,
 And April weeps — but, O ye hours!
 Follow with May's fairest flowers.
 January 1, 1821.

TO NIGHT

SWIFTLY walk over the western wave,
 Spirit of Night!
 Out of the misty eastern cave,
 Where all the long and lone daylight
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear, 5
 Which make thee terrible and dear, —
 Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
 Star-inwrought!
 Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day, 10
 Kiss her until she be wearied out,
 Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
 Touching all with thine opiate wand —
 Come, long-sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn. 15
 I sighed for thee;
 When light rode high, and the dew was gone,

SONNET TO BYRON

189

15 And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest, 20
I sighed for thee.

20 Thy brother Death came, and cried :
Wouldst thou me ?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee : 25
Shall I nestle near thy side ?
Wouldst thou me ?— And I replied :
No, not thee !

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon — 30
Sleep will come when thou art fled ;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night —
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon ! 35

1821.

SONNET TO BYRON

[I AM afraid these verses will not please you, but]
10 If I esteemed you less, Envy would kill
Pleasure, and leave to Wonder and Despair
The ministration of the thoughts that fill
The mind which, like a worm whose life may share
A portion of the unapproachable, R
Marks your creations rise as fast and fair
15 As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.
But such is my regard that nor your power
To soar above the heights where others [climb],

gone,

Nor fame, that shadow of the unborn hour 10
Cast from the envious future on the time,
Might give me regret for his unhonoured name
Which dares these words: — the worm beneath the sod
Must wait itself in homage of the God.

1222

LINES

1

FAR, far away, O ye
Halycons of memory!
Seek some far calmer nest
Than this abandoned breast ;
No news of your false spring
To my heart's winter bring ;
Once having gone, in vain
Ye come again.

II

Vultures, who build your bowers
High in the future's towers! 10
Withered hopes on hopes are spread ;
Dying joys, choked by the dead,
Will serve your beaks for prey
Many a day.

1821.

TO EMILIA VIVIANI

MADONNA, wherefore hast thou sent to me
Sweet-basil and mignonette?
Embleming love and health, which never yet
In the same wreath might be.
Alas, and they are wet!

Is it with thy kisses or thy tears?
 For never rain nor dew
 Such fragrance drew
 From plant or flower — the very doubt endears
 My sadness ever new, 10
 The sighs I breathe, the tears I shed, for thee.

Send the stars light, but send not love to me,
 In whom love ever made
 Health like a heap of embers soon to fade.
 March, 1821.

TO —

MUSIC, when soft voices die,
 Vibrates in the memory;
 Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
 Live within the sense they quicken;

Rose-leaves, when the rose is dead, 5
 Are heaped for the belovéd's bed;
 And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
 Love itself shall slumber on.
 1821.

TO —

ONE word is too often profaned
 For me to profane it,
 One feeling too falsely disdained
 For thee to disdain it;
 One hope is too like despair 5
 For prudence to smother,
 And Pity from thee more dear
 Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,
 But wilt thou accept not 10
 The worship the ! & lifts above
 And the Heaven subject not,—
 The desire of the ! for the star,
 Of the night for the morrow,
 The devotion to something afar 15
 From the sphere of our sorrow ?

1821.

TO —

WHEN passion's trance is overpast,
 If tenderness and truth could last
 Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep
 Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,
 I should not weep, I should not weep ! 5

It were enough to feel, to see
 Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
 And dream the rest — and burn and be
 The secret food of fires unseen,
 Couldst thou but be as thou hast been. 10

After the slumber of the year
 The woodland violets reappear ;
 All things revive in field or grove
 And sky and sea, but two, which move
 And form all others, life and love. 15

1821.

BRIDAL SONG

I

THE golden gates of sleep unbar
 Where strength and beauty, met together,
 Kindle their image like a star
 In a sea of glassy weather!
 Night, with all thy stars look down ; 5
 Darkness, weep thy holiest dew ; —
 Never smiled the inconstant moon
 On a pair so true.
 Let eyes not see their own delight ;
 Haste, swift hour, and thy flight 10
 Oft renew.

II

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her!
 Holy stars, permit no wrong!
 And return to wake the sleeper,
 Dawn, — ere it be long. 15
 O joy ! O fear ! what will be done
 In the absence of the sun !
 Come along !

1821.

MUTABILITY

THE flower that smiles to-day
 To-morrow dies ;
 All that we wish to stay,
 Tempts and then flies.
 What is this world's delight ? 5
 Lightning that mocks the night,
 Brief even as bright.

Virtue, how frail it is!
 Friendship, how rare!
 Love, how it sells poor bliss 10
 For proud despair!
 But we, though soon they fall,
 Survive their joy and all
 Which ours we call.

Whilst skies are blue and bright, 15
 Whilst flowers are gay,
 Whilst eyes that change ere night
 Make glad the day,
 Whilst yet the calm hours creep
 Dream thou — and from thy sleep 20
 Then wake to weep.

1821.

SONNET

POLITICAL GREATNESS

Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
 Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,
 Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame: —
 Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts;
 History is but the shadow of their shame; 5
 Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts,
 As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
 Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery
 Of their own likeness. What are numbers, knit
 By force or custom? Man who man would be, 10
 Must rule the empire of himself! in it
 Must be supreme, establishing his throne
 On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
 Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

1821.

TO-MORROW

WHERE art thou, beloved To-morrow?

When young and old, and strong and weak,
Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,

Thy sweet smiles we ever seek, —

In thy place — ah! well-a-day!

We find the thing we fled — To-day.

1821.

A LAMENT

O WORLD! O Life! O Time!

On whose last steps I climb,

Trembling at that where I had stood before;

When will return the glory of your prime?

No more — oh, never more!

Out of the day and night

A joy has taken flight;

Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,

Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight

No more — oh, never more!

1821.

A LAMENT

SWIFTER far than summer's flight,

Swifter far than youth's delight,

Swifter far than happy night,

Art thou come and gone:

As the earth when leaves are dead,

As the night when sleep is sped,

As the heart when joy is fled,

I am left alone, alone.

The swallow Summer comes again,
The owlet Night resumes her reign, 10
But the wild swan Youth is fain

To fly with thee, false as thou :
My heart each day desires the morrow,
Sleep itself is turned to sorrow ;
Vainly would my winter borrow 15
Sunny leaves from any bough.

Lilies for a bridal bed,
Roses for a matron's head,
Violets for a maiden dead ;
Pansies let my flowers be : 20
On the living grave I bear
Scatter them without a tear ;
Let no friend, however dear,
Waste one hope, one fear for me.

1821.

ADONAIS

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS

PREFACE

Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, τοτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες
 Πῶς τευ τοῖς χεῖλεσσι ποτὶ δράμε, κοῦκ ἐγλυκάνθη;
 Τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσούτον ἀνάμερος, ἡ κίρῃσαι τοι,
 * Ἢ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἔκφυγεν ᾤδαν.

Μοσχὺς, *Epitaph. Bion.*

IT is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled, proves, at least, that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of *Hyperion* as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the 23d of February, 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses, was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and, where canker-worms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued; and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics, of the true greatness of his powers, were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows, or one, like Keats's, composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, *Paris*, and *Woman*, and *A Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who, in their venal good-nature, presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What guat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the Elegy was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, "almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend." Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from "such stuff as dreams are made of." His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

Ἄσπερ πρὶν μὲν ἱλαμπες ἐνὶ ζυλοῖσιν ἔῃσιν
 Νῦν δὲ θανῶν ἁλμπεις ἰσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.

PLATO.

I

I WEEP for Adonais — he is dead!
 Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers, 5
 And teach them thine own sorrow! Say: "With me
 Died Adonais; till the Future dares
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
 An echo and a light unto eternity!"

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay, 10
 When thy son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
 In darkness? Where was lorn Urania
 When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
 'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
 She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath, 15
 Rekindled all the fading melodies
 With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
 He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

III

Oh, weep for Adonais — he is dead!
 Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep! 20
 Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
 Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,
 Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
 For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
 Descend: — oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
 Will yet restore him to the vital air; 26
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania! — He died,
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain, 30
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathéd rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite 35
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of
light.

V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb:
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time 40
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene
abode. 45

VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true-love tears instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew! 50
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals, nipt before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies — the storm is overpast.

VII

To that high capital, where kingly Death 55
 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
 He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
 A grave among the eternal. — Come away!
 Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
 Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still 60
 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
 Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
 Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
 Within the twilight chamber spreads apace 65
 The shadow of white Death, and at the door
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace
 His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface 70
 So fair a prey, till darkness and the law
 Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain
 draw.

IX

Oh, weep for Adonais! — The quick Dreams,
 The passion-wingéd ministers of thought,
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams 75
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
 The love which was its music, wander not, —
 Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
 But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn
 their lot 79
 Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
 They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold
 head,
 And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries :
 " Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead ;
 See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes, 85
 Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
 A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain."
 Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise !
 She knew not 't was her own ; as with no stain
 She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain. 90

XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
 Washed his light limbs, as if embalming them ;
 Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw
 The wreath upon him, like an anadem
 Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem ; 95
 Another in her wilful grief would break
 Her bow and wingéd reeds, as if to stem
 A greater loss with one which was more weak ;
 And dull the barbéd fire against his frozen cheek.

XII

Another Splendour on his mouth alit, 100
 That mouth whence it was wont to draw the breath
 Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
 And pass into the panting heart beneath
 With lightning and with music : the damp death
 Quenched its caress upon his icy lips ; 105
 And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
 Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
 It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its
 eclipse.

XIII

And others came: Desires and Adorations,
 Wingéd Persuasions, and veiled Destinies, 110
 Splendours, and Grooms, and glimmering incarna-
 tions
 Of Hopes and Fears, and twilight Fantasies,
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes, 115
 Came in slow pomp; — the moving pomp might seem
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV

All he had loved and moulded into thought
 From shape and hue and odour and sweet sound,
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought 120
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
 Dimmed the ærial eyes that kindle day;
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay, 125
 And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

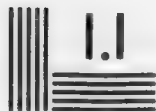
XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
 And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
 And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
 Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day; 131
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
 Than those for whose disdain she pined away
 Into a shadow of all sounds: — a drear
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen
 hear. 135



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XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw
down

Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves ; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year ?
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear, 140
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais : wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears ; odour, to sighing ruth.

XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale, 145
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain ;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest, 150
As Albion wails for thee : the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest !

XVIII

Ah woe is me ! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year ; 155
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone ;
The ants, the bees, the swallows, reappear ;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier ;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere ; 160
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

XIX

Through wood and stream and field and hill and
Ocean

A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion, 165
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos: in its steam immersed,
The lamps of heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst,
Diffuse themselves, and spend in love's delight 170
The beauty and the joy of their renewéd might.

XX

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death, 175
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath.
Naught we know, dies. Shall that alone which
knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning? — th' intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose. 180

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean 185
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must
borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,

Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
 Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to
 sorrow.

XXII

He will awake no more, oh, never more! 190
 "Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother,
 rise
 Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
 A wound more fierce than his, with tears and
 sighs."
 And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's song 195
 Had held in holy silence, cried: "Arise!"
 Swift as a thought by the snake Memory stung,
 From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
 Out of the East, and follows wild and drear 200
 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
 Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
 Had left the Earth a corpse; — sorrow and fear
 So struck, so roused, so rapt, Urania;
 So saddened round her like an atmosphere 205
 Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way,
 Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
 Through camps and cities rough with stone, and
 steel,
 And human hearts, which, to her æry tread 210
 Yielding not, wounded the invisible

Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell;
 And barbéd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than
 they,
 Rent the soft Form they never could repel, 214
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
 Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
 Revisited those lips, and life's pale light 220
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear de-
 light.
 "Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
 As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
 Leave me not!" cried Urania: her distress
 Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her
 vain caress. 225

XXVI

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
 Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
 And in my heartless breast and burning brain
 That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,
 With food of saddest memory kept alive, 230
 Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
 Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
 All that I am to be as thou now art!
 But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

XXVII

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert, 235
 Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men

Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty
heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then 239
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like
deer.

XXVIII

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead; 245
The vultures, to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion; — how they fled,
When, like Apollo from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped 250
And smiled! — The spoilers tempt no second
blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying
low.

XXIX

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn, 255
And the immortal stars awake again.
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its
light 260
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."

XXX

Thus ceased she : and the mountain shepherds came,
 Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent ;
 The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
 Over his living head like Heaven is bent, 265
 An early but enduring monument,
 Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
 In sorrow ; from her wilds Ierne sent
 The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
 And love taught grief to fall like music from his
 tongue. 270

XXXI

'Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
 A phantom among men, companionless
 As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
 Whose thunder is its knell ; he, as I guess,
 Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness, 275
 Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
 With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
 And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
 Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

XXXII

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift — 280
 A Love in desolation masked ; — a Power
 Girt round with weakness ; — it can scarce uplift
 The weight of the superincumbent hour ;
 It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
 A breaking billow : — even whilst we speak 285
 Is it not broken ? On the withering flower
 The killing sun smiles brightly ; on a cheek
 The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may
 break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue; 290
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart; 296
A herd-abandoned deer, struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle
band
Who in another's fate now wept his own; 300
As in the accents of an unknown land
He sang new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: "Who art
thou?"
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow, 305
Which was like Cain's or Christ's. — Oh! that it should
be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone, 310
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one;
Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice. 315

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison — oh,
 What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
 Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
 The nameless worm would now itself disown:
 It felt, yet could escape the magic tone 320
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
 But what was howling in one breast alone,
 Silent with expectation of the song,
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre un-
 strung.

XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame! 325
 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
 But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
 And ever at thy season be thou free
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow: 330
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt — as now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
 Far from these carrion-kites that scream below; 335
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
 Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.
 Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
 Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
 A portion of the Eternal, which must glow 340
 Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of
 shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep —
 He hath awakened from the dream of life —
 'T is we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep 345
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
 And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
 Invulnerable nothings. — We decay
 Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
 Convulse us and consume us day by day, 350
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living
 clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
 Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,
 Can touch him not and torture not again; 355
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain
 He is secure, and now can never mourn
 A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn. 360

XLI

He lives, he wakes — 't is Death is dead, not he;
 Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young Dawn,
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone!
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan! 365
 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou
 Air,
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

XLII

He is made one with Nature : there is heard 370
 His voice in all her music, from the moan
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird ;
 He is a presence to be felt and known
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move 375
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own ;
 Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness
 Which once he made more lovely : he doth bear 380
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling
 there
 All new successions to the forms they wear ;
 Torturing the unwilling dross that checks its flight
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear ; 385
 And bursting in its beauty and its might
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendours of the firmament of time
 May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not :
 Like stars to their appointed height they climb, 390
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot
 The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
 Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
 And love and life contend in it, for what
 Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there, 395
 And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
 Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
 Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
 Rose pale, his solemn agony had not 400
 Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
 And as he fell, and as he lived and loved,
 Sublimely mild, a spirit without spot,
 Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
 Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reprov'd. 405

XLVI

And many more, whose names on earth are dark,
 But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
 So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
 Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
 "Thou art become as one of us," they cry; 410
 "It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
 Swung blind in unascended majesty,
 Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
 Assume thy wingéd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth, 415
 Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
 Sate the void circumference: then shrink 420
 Even to a point within our day and night;
 And keep thy heart light, lest it make thee sink
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the
 brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
 Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 't is nought 425
 That ages, empires, and religions, there
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
 For such as he can lend, — they borrow not
 Glory from those who made the world their prey;
 And he is gathered to the kings of thought 430
 Who waged contention with their time's decay,
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome, — at once the Paradise,
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness; 434
 And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
 Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead 440
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

L

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
 And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
 Pavilioning the dust of him who planned 445
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand
 Like flame transformed to marble: and beneath
 A field is spread, on which a newer band
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce-extinguished
 breath. 450

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
 To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
 Its charge to each ; and if the seal is set,
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
 Break it not thou ! too surely shalt thou find 455
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become ?

LII

✓ The One remains, the many change and pass ; 460
 Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows
 fly ;
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
 Stains the white radiance of eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments. — Die, 464
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek !
 Follow where all is fled ! — Rome's azure sky,
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my heart ?
 Thy hopes are gone before : from all things here 470
 They have departed ; thou shouldst now depart !
 A light is past from the revolving year,
 And man, and woman ; and what still is dear
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
 The soft sky smiles, the low wind whispers near : 475
 'T is Adonais calls ! oh, hasten thither !
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,
 That Benediction which the eclipsing curse 480
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
 Which, through the web of being blindly wove
 By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
 The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me, 485
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
 Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given ; 490
 The massy earth and spheréd skies are riven !
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar :
 Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are. 495

1821.

A DIRGE

ROUGH wind, that moanest loud
 Grief too sad for song ;
 Wild wind, when sullen cloud
 Knells all the night long ;
 Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
 Bare woods, whose branches strain,
 Deep caves and dreary main,
 Wail for the world's wrong !

5

1822.

EPITAPH

THESE are two friends whose lives were undivided :
 So let their memory be, now they have glided
 Under the grave ; let not their bones be parted,
 For their two hearts in life were single-hearted.

1822.

LINES

WHEN the lamp is shattered,
 The light in the dust lies dead ;
 When the cloud is scattered,
 The rainbow's glory is shed ;
 When the lute is broken,
 Sweet tones are remembered not ;
 When the lips have spoken,
 Loved accents are soon forgot.

5

As music and splendour
 Survive not the lamp and the lute,

10

The heart's echoes render
 No song when the spirit is mute, —
 No song but sad dirges,
 Like the wind through a ruined cell,
 Or the mournful surges 15
 That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled,
 Love first leaves the well-built nest;
 The weak one is singled
 To endure what it once possest. 20
 O Love! who bewailest
 The frailty of all things here,
 Why choose you the frailest
 For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee, 25
 As the storms rock the ravens on high:
 Bright reason will mock thee,
 Like the sun from a wintry sky.
 From thy nest every rafter
 Will rot, and thine eagle home 30
 Leave thee naked to laughter,
 When leaves fall and cold winds come.
 1822.

SONG

FROM "CHARLES THE FIRST"

A WIDOW bird sate mourning for her love
 Upon a wintry bough;
 The frozen wind crept on above,
 The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare, 5
 No flower upon the ground,
 And little motion in the air
 Except the mill-wheel's sound.

1822.

TO JANE

THE INVITATION

BEST and brightest, come away,
 Fairer far than this fair day,
 Which, like thee, to those in sorrow,
 Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
 To the rough Year just awake 5
 In its cradle on the brake.
 The brightest hour of unborn Spring,
 Through the winter wandering,
 Found, it seems, the halcyon morn
 To hoar February born; 10
 Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
 It kissed the forehead of the earth,
 And smiled upon the silent sea,
 And bade the frozen streams be free,
 And waked to music all their fountains, 15
 And breathed upon the frozen mountains,
 And like a prophetess of May
 Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
 Making the wintry world appear
 Like one on whom thou smilest, dear. 20

Away, away, from men and towns,
 To the wild wood and the downs;
 To the silent wilderness
 Where the soul need not repress

5 Its music, lest it should not find 25
An echo in another's mind,
While the touch of Nature's art
Harmonizes heart to heart.
I leave this notice on my door
For each accustomed visitor: — 30
"I am gone into the fields
To take what this sweet hour yields.
Reflection, you may come to-morrow,
Sit by the fireside of Sorrow.
You with the unpaid bill, Despair, 35
You, tiresome verse-reciter, Care,
I will pay you in the grave,
Death will listen to your stave.
Expectation, too, be off!
To-day is for itself enough. 40
Hope, in pity, mock not Woe
With smiles, nor follow where I go;
Long having lived on thy sweet food,
At length I find one moment good
After long pain — with all your love, 45
This you never told me of."

15 Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake, arise, and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains,
And the pools where winter rains 50
Image all their roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green, and ivy dun,
Round stems that never kiss the sun,
Where the lawns and pastures be 55
And the sandhills of the sea,
Where the melting hoar-frost wets
The daisy-star that never sets,

And wind-flowers, and violets,
 Which yet join not scent to hue, 60
 Crown the pale year weak and new;
 When the night is left behind
 In the deep east, dun and blind,
 And the blue noon is over us,
 And the multitudinous 65
 Billows murmur at our feet,
 Where the earth and ocean meet,
 And all things seem only one,
 In the universal Sun.
 February, 1822.

TO JANE

THE RECOLLECTION

I

Now the last day of many days,
 All beautiful and bright as thou,
 The loveliest and the last, is dead,
 Rise, Memory, and write its praise!
 Up, do thy wonted work! come, trace 5
 The epitaph of glory fled,
 For now the Earth has changed its face,
 A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

II

We wandered to the Pine Forest
 That skirts the Ocean's foam, 10
 The lightest wind was in its nest,
 The tempest in its home.
 The whispering waves were half asleep,
 The clouds were gone to play,

60 And on the bosom of the deep 15
The smile of Heaven lay ;
It seemed as if the hour were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which scattered from above the sun
65 A light of Paradise. 20

III

We paused amid the pines that stood
The giants of the waste,
Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
As serpents interlaced,
And soothed by every azure breath 25
That under heaven is blown,
To harmonies and hues beneath,
As tender as its own ;
Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,
Like green waves on the sea, 30
As still as in the silent deep
The ocean-woods may be.

IV

5 How calm it was! — the silence there
By such a chain was bound,
That even the busy woodpecker 35
Made stiller by her sound
The inviolable quietness ;
The breath of peace we drew
With its soft motion made not less
10 The calm that round us grew. 40
There seemed from the remotest seat
Of the wide mountain waste,
To the soft flower beneath our feet,
A magic circle traced ;

A spirit interfused around, 45
 A thrilling silent life,
 To momentary peace it bound
 Our mortal nature's strife; —
 And still I felt the centre of
 The magic circle there 50
 Was one fair Form that filled with love
 The lifeless atmosphere.

V

We paused beside the pools that lie
 Under the forest bough;
 Each seemed as 't were a little sky 55
 Gulfed in a world below;
 A firmament of purple light,
 Which in the dark earth lay,
 More boundless than the depth of night,
 And purer than the day; 60
 In which the lovely forests grew,
 As in the upper air,
 More perfect both in shape and hue
 Than any spreading there.
 There lay the glade, the neighbouring lawn, 65
 And through the dark green wood
 The white sun twinkling like the dawn
 Out of a speckled cloud.
 Sweet views which in our world above
 Can never well be seen, 70
 Were imaged by the water's love
 Of that fair forest green.
 And all was interfused beneath
 With an Elysian glow,
 An atmosphere without a breath, 75
 A softer day below.

Like one beloved, the scene had lent
 To the dark water's breast
 Its every leaf and lineament
 With more than truth exprest, 80
 Until an envious wind crept by,
 Like an unwelcome thought,
 Which from the mind's too faithful eye
 Blots one dear image out.
 Though Thou art ever fair and kind, 85
 And forests ever green,
 Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,
 Than calm in waters seen.

February, 1822.

WITH A GUITAR

TO JANE

Ariel to Miranda: — Take
 This slave of Music, for the sake
 Of him, who is the slave of thee;
 And teach it all the harmony
 In which thou canst, and only thou, 5
 Make the delighted spirit glow,
 Till joy denies itself again,
 And, too intense, is turned to pain.
 For by permission and command
 Of thine own Prince Ferdinand, 10
 Poor Ariel sends this silent token
 Of more than ever can be spoken;
 Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who
 From life to life must still pursue
 Your happiness, for thus alone 15
 Can Ariel ever find his own.

From Prospero's enchanted cell,
As the mighty verses tell,
To the throne of Naples he
Lit you o'er the trackless sea, 20
Flitting on, your prow before,
Like a living meteor.
When you die, the silent Moon,
In her interlunar swoon,
Is not sadder in her cell 25
Than deserted Ariel :
When you live again on earth,
Like an unseen star of birth,
Ariel guides you o'er the sea
Of life from your nativity. 30
Many changes have been run
Since Ferdinand and you begun
Your course of love, and Ariel still
Has tracked your steps and served your will.
Now in humbler, happier lot, 35
This is all remembered not ;
And now, alas ! the poor sprite is
Imprisoned for some fault of his
In a body like a grave ;—
From you he only dares to crave, 40
For his service and his sorrow,
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought
To echo all harmonious thought,
Felled a tree, while on the steep 45
The woods were in their winter sleep,
Rocked in that repose divine
On the wind-swept Apennine ;
And dreaming, some of autumn past,

And some of spring approaching fast, 50
And some of April buds and showers,
And some of songs in July bowers,
And all of love ; and so this tree, —
O that such our death may be ! —
Died in sleep, and felt no pain, 55
To live in happier form again :
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,
The artist wrought this loved Guitar,
And taught it justly to reply,
To all who question skilfully, 60
In language gentle as thine own ;
Whispering in enamoured tone
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
And summer winds in sylvan cells ;
For it had learnt all harmonies 65
Of the plains and of the skies,
Of the forests and the mountains,
And the many-voicéd fountains ;
The clearest echoes of the hills,
The softest notes of falling rills, 70
The melodies of birds and bees,
The murmuring of summer seas,
And pattering rain, and breathing dew,
And airs of evening ; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound 75
Which, driven on its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles on its way.
All this it knows, but will not tell
To those who cannot question well 80
The spirit that inhabits it ;
It talks according to the wit
Of its companions ; and no more

Is heard than has been felt before
By those who tempt it to betray 85
These secrets of an elder day.
But, sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,
It keeps its highest, holiest tone
For our beloved Friend alone. 90

1822.

NOTES

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1 Stanzas — April, 1814.

See Introduction, page xxxi. "The beautiful 'Stanzas,' dated 'April, 1814,' read like a fantasia of sorrow, the motives of which are supplied by Shelley's anticipated farewell to Bracknell, and his return, at the call of duty, to a loveless home. . . . It is moonless and starless night in the poem — night with its melancholy ebb of life and strength; and at such an hour the lover is summoned to bid farewell to a refuge as dear as this at Bracknell was to Shelley, and to loved ones as gentle and delicate in sympathy as he had found in Harriet Boinville and Cornelia Turner." — Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, I, 411.

2 To Coleridge.

"The poem beginning, 'O, there are spirits in the air,' was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew; and at whose character he could only guess imperfectly, through his writings, and accounts he heard of him from some who knew him well. He regarded his change of opinions as rather an act of will than conviction, and believed that in his inner heart he would be haunted by what Shelley considered the better and holier aspirations of his youth." — Mrs. Shelley's note. "I have often questioned whether the poem . . . has reference (as Mrs. Shelley declares it has) to Coleridge, or whether it was not rather addressed in a despondent mood by Shelley to his own spirit." — Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, I, 472.

3 25-30. Note the references in this stanza to Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, — "glory of the moon," "Night's ghosts and dreams," "foul fiend." These seem to me opposed to Professor Dowden's conjecture. To Wordsworth.

Shelley's early regard for Wordsworth slowly lessened. The elder poet, at first eloquently liberal in his political utterance, became conservative with years, and seemed to Shelley to be betraying his noblest human impulses. In 1819 Shelley wrote his satire on Wordsworth, *Peter Bell the Third*. Cf. Browning's *The Lost Leader*.

4 A Summer Evening Churchyard.

See Introduction, page xxxv. "The summer evening that suggested to him the poem written in the churchyard of Lechlade, occurred during his voyage up the Thames, in the autumn of 1815. He had been advised by a physician to live as much as possible in the open air; and a fortnight of a bright warm July was spent in tracing the Thames to its source." — Mrs. Shelley's note.

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1 3, 4. Cf. *To Night*, ll. 10, 11.

5 25 *sq.* Note the poet's frequent premonitions of early death. See Introduction, pp. xxvi and xlix.

5 Lines ("The cold earth slept below").

"There can be no great rashness," says Forman, "in suggesting that the subject of the poem is the death of Harriet Shelley, who drowned herself on the 9th of November, 1816. In that case, 1815 and raven hair were used as a disguise, Harriet's hair having been a light brown."

8 Hymn to Intellectual Beauty.

Based on the Platonic doctrine of supreme beauty. See the speech of Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*. "The *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* was conceived during his voyage round the lake with Lord Byron." — Mrs. Shelley's note. "A Presence, or its radiant yet awful shadow, haunts and startles and waylays us in all that is beautiful, sublime, or heroic in the world without us or in the world within; to this we dedicate our powers in all high moments of joy or aspiration; and when the ecstasy has sunk and the joy has faded, still in a calmer, purer temper, it may become the habit of our soul to follow upon the track of this ideal Loveliness, until in a measure we partake of its image." — Dowden's *Life*, II, 31.

9 32-36. "The beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty," said Sidney Lanier, "mean one thing, burn as one fire, shine as one light."

49-52. Cf. *Alastor*, ll. 18-49.

51. "pursuing." The final "g" is slurred, a common practice in both England and the Southern States. Cf. *Arethusa*, ll. 52, 53; *Mont Blanc*, ll. 107, 109; *Prometheus Unbound*, I, 1, 103, 4.

10 59. Cf. *Prometheus Unbound*, IV, 453.

11 *Mont Blanc*.

This poem, like the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* and *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills*, — indeed, like all of Shelley's poems that touch the subject even remotely, — witnesses the unity of all nature, and its ideal significance. Sensible nature is but a world of symbols governed always by a Nature behind nature, by a Mind and Power

"Remote, serene and inaccessible."

"*Mont Blanc* was inspired by a view of that mountain and its surrounding peaks and valleys, as he lingered on the Bridge of Arve on his way through the Valley of Chamouni."

Mrs. Shelley's note. "It was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe; and as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untamable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those

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- feelings sprang." — Shelley's note. Cf. Coleridge's *Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni*.
- 12 49 sq. The student will note the frequency with which Shelley and other romantic poets touch the idea of sleep. See Introduction, pp. lx, lxi.
- 13 80. Cf. Wordsworth's sonnet, *England and Switzerland, 1802*.
- 14 86. "dædal." Curiously made; complex; intricate. Note Shelley's fondness for the phrase "dædal earth." Cf. *Ode to Liberty*, l. 18; *Hymn of Pan*, l. 26; *Prometheus Unbound*, III. i. 26; IV, 116, 416.
- 16 **To Constantia, Singing.**
This poem was addressed to Clara Jane Clairmont, Godwin's stepdaughter, and friend of the Shelleys. She had an excellent voice, and was fond of musical instruments, though her sense of tune is said to have been deficient. The lyric testifies to Shelley's appreciation of the soul of music.
- 17 30, 31. Cf. *Epipsychidion*, ll. 445-456.
- 17 **Sonnet — Ozymandias.**
Structurally uncanonical. See Introduction, p. lxiv.
Diodorus, the Greek historian, tells us that the statue of Ozymandias was the largest in all Egypt, and bore the inscription: "I am Ozymandias, king of kings; if any one wishes to know what I am and where I lie, let him surpass me in some of my exploits."
8. "hand." The sculptor's. "heart." The king's.
- 18 **Lines to a Critic.**
This remonstrance was doubtless provoked by certain attacks upon the unrevised *Laon and Cythna*, of which a few copies were issued late in 1817. In a letter of December 11, Shelley wrote to his publisher Ollier, who was disposed to withdraw from the undertaking: "I beseech you to reconsider the matter, for your sake no less than for my own. Assume the high and the secure ground of courage. The people who visit your shop, and the wretched hawker who gave his worthless custom to some other bookseller, are not the public."
- 19 **Passage of the Apennines.**
Written probably in the lonely inn at Pietra Mala, high in the Apennines. Miss Clairmont's journal, touching this experience of the travellers, remarks: "The wind is always high, and it howls dismally."
9. "lav." Used, of course, for "lie," owing to the constraint of rhyme.
- 20 **Lines Written among the Euganean Hills.**
The poem "was written," said Shelley, "after a day's excursion among those lovely mountains which surround what was once the retreat, and where is now the sepulchre, of Petrarch. If any one is inclined to condemn the insertion

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of the introductory lines, which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn, on the highest peak of those delightful mountains, I can only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness." The poem was written in large part at Este, and, according to Medwin, finished at Naples. Mrs. Shelley wrote of Este: "We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines, while to the east, the horizon was lost in misty distance."

20 16. A fine example of artistic repetition.

18. "Weltering." Moving vaguely, without direction; tossing. Cf. Milton's *Lycidas*, ll. 12-14:—

"He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear."

21 43. "are." Note the error in syntax.

23 97. Amphitrite was the daughter of Oceanus and Tethys, and wife of Neptune.

100 sq. Comment on this splendid picture is superfluous, yet attention may be called to the "romantic" incorporating into nature of man-built structures. Cf. Wordsworth's *Sonnet on Westminster Bridge*, and Emerson's *The Problem*, ll. 25-62.

100. The "time" of the poem is a single day. See also ll. 71-73, 206, 285, 320-326. Cf. Browning's *Colombe's Birthday* and *Pippa Passes*.

116. "his queen." Probably a reference to the custom of "wedding the Adriatic," originated in 1177, by Pope Alexander III. After the victory of the Venetian galleys over the Ghibellines, led by Otho, the Pope presented the Doge Ziani with a ring, commanding him to wed the Adriatic therewith, thus testifying the sea's subjection to Venice as her lord and master.

118. "his prey." A reference to the apparently slow sinking of Venice. The student will recall the fall of the Campanile in 1902. Professor Marinelli, however, declares that the northern Adriatic is slowly drying up, and that the entire Gulf of Venice will eventually disappear, the mean annual increase in the delta of the River Po being three tenths of a mile.

24 123. "the slave of slaves." Austria, then ruling Venice and virtually all of Italy.

152. "Celtic Anarch's." Probably another reference to

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- Austria, the term Celt long being applied to the northern barbarians as distinguished from the Romans.
- 25 167-205. Shelley added this passage to the original manuscript. The reference is, of course, to Byron, who was then at Venice.
- 178-183. Cf. with these lines Shelley's remark in a letter to Peacock: "That he is a great poet, I think the address to ocean proves."
- 26 195. "Seamander." An ancient river near Troy.
196. "divinest Shakespeare's." Shelley was more attracted by Shakespeare than by any other English writer.
- 27 223. "brutal Celt." See note on l. 152.
239. "Ezzelin." Ezzelino da Romano, a Ghibelline leader.
240. Cf. Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, ll. 195-198; Milton's *Paradise Lost*, ll. 648 sq.
- 28 285-319. Cf. with this commingling of the human spirit with natural phenomena — an imaginative habit of the romanticists — Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*, ll. 95-104, and Emerson's *Each and All*. Cf. also *Adonais*, ll. 370-378.
- 30 335-373. See Introduction, p. xlv.
- 31 **Stanzas Written in Dejection, near Naples.**
- "At this time Shelley suffered greatly in health. He put himself under the care of a medical man, who promised great things, and made him endure severe bodily pain, without any good results. Constant and poignant physical suffering exhausted him, and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often greatly enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples, and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed by illness, became gloomy, and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses, which he hid from fear of wounding me, poured forth morbid but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness." — Mrs. Shelley's note. See Introduction, p. xli.
- 32 33. Cf. *Queen Mab*, ll. 1, 2; *To Night*, ll. 22, 24; Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Lyric 68, stanza 1.
- 33 **Lines to an Indian Air.**
- A manuscript copy of this lyric was found on Shelley's body after his death.
11. "champak." Probably jasmine.
18. Cf. *Epipsychidion*, l. 591.
- 34 **Love's Philosophy.**
- In *Notes and Queries* (January, 1868) Mr. J. H. Dixon relates this poem to a short French song, — "Les vents baisent les nuages." — Forman.
- Song — To the Men of England.**
- At an open-air Reform meeting held in St. Peter's Field, Manchester, August 16, 1819, and dispersed by the militia, several casualties had occurred. Alarmist reports reached

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Shelley at Leghorn, and he at first anticipated a general English revolution. "It was," says Dowden, "the hardships and sufferings of the industrious poor that especially claimed his sympathy, and he thought of publishing for them a series of popular songs which should inspire them with heart and hope, and perhaps awaken and direct the imagination of the reformers. . . . The *Songs and Poems for the Men of England*, written in 1819, remained unpublished until several years after Shelley's death, when the first great battle for reform had been fought and won." — II. 285-6.

35 9-12. In his willingness to become, for the moment, a "popular" poet, Shelley has let his metaphors shift for themselves.

36 England in 1819.

I. George III reigned from 1760 to 1820. During the last ten years he was blind, deaf, and insane, his eldest son, afterward George IV, serving as Prince Regent.

36 Ode to the West Wind.

"This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and arid, was collecting the vapours which pour down the annual rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset, with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

"The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it." — Shelley's note.

"Harmonizing under a common idea the forces of external nature and the passion of the writer's individual heart, the stanzas, with all the penetrating power of a lyric, have something almost of epic largeness and grandeur." — Dowden's *Life*, II, 299.

Says Professor W. J. Alexander: "The *terza rima* (aba, bab, cde, etc.) employed in this poem is but little used in English poetry. The suitability here of the stanza form to the theme should be noted. The series of sustained waves of feeling, each closing in an invocation, corresponds to the suspended rhyme of each triplet, resolved at the close of each fourth stanza by the couplet, with its sense of completeness."

It will be noted that in the first three sections of this impassioned cry, the poet pursues the West Wind — so to speak — as it blows over land (i), and "mid the steep sky's commotion" (ii), and upon the sea (iii), while in the two concluding sections he passes through momentary

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longings to be himself resolved into each of these (iv, 43-45) into an appeal not for translation, but for union, eagerly adventuring even into identification as based on the truth of his own spirit's oneness ("one too like thee") with that of the West Wind: ---

" . . . Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!"

Perhaps the words of his well-loved Ariel, sprite of air and fire, were haunting his memory (*The Tempest*, I, 2, 198, 199; 211, 212): —

"I flam'd amazement: sometime I'd divide,
And burn in many places."

" . . . the vessel,
Then all afire with me."

- 37 21. "Maenad." See note on *The Sensitive Plant*, I, 34.
38 32. Baiae was an ancient Roman city and watering-place near Naples.
43. Cf. *Prometheus Unbound*, IV, 528.
40 **Prometheus Unbound.**

See Introduction, pp. xli, lvii, lviii, lix, lxiii, lxiv, and lxvi. "The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species was that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. This also forms a portion of Christianity: God made earth and man perfect, till he, by his fall,

'Brought death into the world and all our woe.'

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these Notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on was the image of one warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all — even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity; a victim full of fortitude and hope and the spirit of triumph, emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of God. Such he had depicted in his last poem, when he made Laon the enemy and the victim of tyrants. He now took a more idealized image of the same subject. He followed certain classical authorities in figuring Saturn as the good principle, Jupiter the usurping evil one, and Prometheus as the regenerator, who, unable to bring mankind back to prim-

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itive innocence, used knowledge as a weapon to defeat evil, by leading mankind, beyond the state wherein they are sinless through ignorance, to that in which they are virtuous through wisdom. Jupiter punished the temerity of the Titan by chaining him to a rock of Caucasus, and causing a vulture to devour his still-renewed heart. There was a prophecy afloat in heaven portending the fall of Jove, the secret of averting which was known only to Prometheus; and the god offered freedom from torture on condition of its being communicated to him. According to the mythological story, this referred to the offspring of Thetis, who was destined to be greater than his father. Prometheus at last bought pardon for his crime of enriching mankind with his gifts, by revealing the prophecy. Hercules killed the vulture, and set him free; and Thetis was married to Peleus, the father of Achilles.

"Shelley adapted the catastrophe of this story to his peculiar views. The son greater than his father, born of the nuptials of Jupiter and Thetis, was to dethrone Evil, and bring back a happier reign than that of Saturn. Prometheus defies the power of his enemy, and endures centuries of torture; till the hour arrives when Jove, blind to the real event, but darkly guessing that some great good to himself will flow, espouses Thetis. At the moment, the Primal Power of the world drives him from his usurped throne, and Strength, in the person of Hercules, liberates Humanity, typified in Prometheus, from the tortures generated by evil done or suffered. Asia, one of the Oceanides, is the wife of Prometheus — she was, according to other mythological interpretations, the same as Venus and Nature. When the benefactor of mankind is liberated, Nature resumes the beauty of her prime, and is united to her husband, the emblem of the human race, in perfect and happy union. In the fourth Act, the poet gives further scope to his imagination, and idealizes the forms of creation — such as we know them, instead of such as they appeared to the Greeks. Maternal Earth, the mighty parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth, the guide of our planet through the realms of sky; while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere.

"Shelley develops more particularly in the lyrics of this drama his abstruse and imaginative theories with regard to the creation. It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem. They elude the ordinary reader by their abstraction and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague. It was his design to write prose metaphysical essays on the nature of Man, which would have served to explain much of what is obscure in his poetry;

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a few scattered fragments of observations and remarks alone remain. He considered these philosophical views of Mind and Nature to be instinct with the intensest spirit of poetry." — From Mrs. Shelley's Note.

"The martyrdom of a heroic lover and saviour of mankind was a theme around which Shelley's highest and purest feelings and imaginings must gather; and for him such a martyrdom must needs be the pledge of the final victory of joy and wisdom and love." — Dowden's *Life*, II, 239.

"The essential thought of Shelley's creed was that the universe is penetrated, vitalized, made real by a spirit, which he sometimes called the Spirit of Nature, but which is always conceived as more than Life, as that which gives its actuality to Life, and lastly as Love and Beauty. To adore this spirit, to clasp it with affection, and to blend with it, is, he thought, the true object of man. Therefore, the final union of Prometheus with Asia is the consummation of human destinies. Love was the only law Shelley recognized. Unterrified by the grim realities of pain and crime revealed in nature and society, he held fast to the belief that, if we could but pierce to the core of things, if we could but be what we might be, the world and man would both attain to their perfection in eternal love. What resolution through some transcendental harmony was expected by Shelley for the palpable discords in the structure of the universe, we hardly know. He did not give his philosophy systematic form: and his new science of love remains a luminous poetic vision — nowhere more brilliantly set forth than in the 'sevenfold hallelujahs and harping symphonies' of this, the final triumph of his lyrical poetry." — John Addington Symonds's *Shelley*.

"A genuine liking for *Prometheus Unbound* may be reckoned the touchstone of a man's capacity for understanding lyric poetry. The world in which the action is supposed to move, rings with spirit voices; and what these spirits sing is melody more purged of mortal dross than any other poet's ear has caught, while listening to his own heart's song, or to the rhythms of the world. There are hymns in *Prometheus*, which seem to realize the miracle of making words, detached from meaning, the substance of a new ethereal music; and yet although their verbal harmony is such, they are never devoid of definite significance for those who understand." — John Addington Symonds's *Shelley*.

"Shelley came to this subject naturally and through years of unconscious preparation; and when the moment of creation came, he felt the Titanic quality . . . in the Revolution, felt the Promethean security of victory it contained — felt, too, the Promethean suffering which

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was the heart of mankind as he saw it, surveying Europe in his day, and knew it in his own bosom as well. He conceived of Prometheus as mankind, of his history and fate as the destiny of man; and being full of that far sight of Prometheus which saw the victorious end — being as full of it as the wheel of Ezekiel was full of eyes — he saw, as the centre of all vision, Prometheus Unbound — the millennium of mankind. He imagined the process of that great liberation and its crowning prosperities. This is his poem. In this poem the Revolution as a moral idea reached its height; that is what makes it, from the social point of view, the race point of view, the greatest work of the last century in creative imagination — for it is the summary and centre, in the world of art, of the greatest power in that century — the power of the idea of humanity." — George Edward Woodberry's *The Torch*.

Prometheus Unbound is Shelley's greatest drama and his greatest poem, fit subject at once for the philosophizings of a Hegel or the musical genius of a Wagner. Though it is possible to question some of its structural ideas in truth of detail, the truth of its movement and aspiration is beyond question. Its political value is no doubt less than its social value, and that again less than its spiritual value. It offers no sure method for the renovation of life, but it impresses us all with the assurance and reality of renovation. Having said this, however, we must caution the student against a too docile acceptance of the dicta of those critics who can see no vitality in Shelley's social and political views. The truth would seem to be that although the poet, as a student of affairs, remained steadily faithful to the teachings of William Godwin, yet his matter of belief in this regard was far less important to him — and ought to be so to us — than the energy and enthusiasm of his belief, its spirit and its power. If he placed too little stress on the effortful co-operation of men in the working out of their long salvation, we must remember that Shelley was a Romantic poet and that his own experience had actually given him more occasion for believing in the beneficent dynamic of Nature than in that of his fellows. In *Man*, as the great member and expression of Nature, he believed; of the mental and spiritual inertia of men he was but too keenly aware. Nor is it by any means certain that Shelley's social philosophy, more particularly examined, is as inadequate as it sometimes appears. It is not to be interpreted as postulating a purely external impulse, but rather an inclusive one. Shelley's mankind, though given fluctuating place in a vast Nature-organization, is not by any means a mechanized conception. He saw and felt the importance of arousing humanity to active enterprise in

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its own behalf, and sounded peal after peal of warning and entreaty in pamphlet and poem; but his eyes were habitually fixed on the great principles of Love and Wisdom and Virtue, abstractions which became so keenly and glowingly realized in his own thought that of their inherent activity he could entertain no doubt. Shelley's great myth-poem, indeed, before and between its rapid, insatiate flights, rests back upon a basis of ultimate and immutable law, that stern yet kind rightness of things of which we have spoken in the Introduction. There is in it the Greek sense of Fate, the Renaissance sense of hope, the Revolution sense of freedom, the Romantic sense of love, the modern sense of science. It completes Æschylus as England completes Greece, and if it is not as sensitive to current knowledge as some have wished, it is yet a poem of astonishingly self-renewing modernity, filled with the spirit of justice, of liberty, and of truth, — in a word, of enfranchised being. Jupiter is the symbol of Hindrance, Custom, Tradition; Prometheus, of Wisdom, Fortitude, Humanity; Asia, of Love and Beauty in Nature; Demogorgon, of Eternal Fate. Prometheus and Jupiter — protagonist and antagonist — are as sharply opposed as, in more concrete drama, are Hamlet and Claudius, Othello and Iago, Beatrice and Count Cenci, and the opposition is far more important here because its issues are felt to be decisive. Yet the dramatic structure of the poem is of less value than its emotional power, — the truth of its instinct, the pure lyric fervour of its utterance, the credible triumph of its great finale.

In the Notes that follow the comparisons with the *Prometheus Vincit* of Æschylus refer to Mrs. Browning's translation, which is, perhaps, the one most easily accessible to the average student. The original text and the admirable versions by J. S. Blackie and by E. H. Plumptre should be consulted, whenever possible.

ACT I

- 44 *Scene.* The time references here and in general throughout the poem are not without their symbolic value.
 2. "One." The speaker. Cf. ll. 265, 274, 493.
 45 9. "Eveless in hate." Blinded by bitterness. Cf. *King Lear*, III, 1, 8. The phrase modifies "thou" in l. 10. It is a Promethean taunt of the dramatic moment quite in keeping with the words Æschylus makes his hero speak to Io concerning Zeus, his persecutor and her lover:

"Io. By whom shall his imperial sceptred hand
 Be emptied so?

Prometheus. Himself shall spoil himself,
 Through his idiotic counsels."

— Mrs. Browning's translation, *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 886-888.

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- 45 24-43. Cf. *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 99-127.
 34. "Heaven's wingéd hound." The vulture. An Æschylean phrase.
 46 40. "When the rocks split." Cf. *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 1205-09:

" . . . For at first
 The Father will split up this jut of rock
 With the great thunder and the bolted flame,
 And hide thy body where a hinge of stone
 Shall catch it like an arm."

50-52. For similar force in invective, cf. Gray's *The Bard*, ll. 1, 6, 25, 97-99.

53. This line contains the first suggestion of the character of the Shellevan Prometheus as excelling that of the Æschylean. The hero of the *Prometheus Vincit* endures and defies. Shelley's Prometheus adds to the just and suffering spirit of his prototype a modern sympathy and magnanimity gained through long discipline, and wins no higher tribute than that of Jupiter himself, — Act III, Sc. 1, ll. 64-69.

54. Forman recommends the omission of "the" as a metrical improvement. It seems, however, that the crowding haste of the line accords happily with its meaning.

63. "vibrated." Note the nervous effect induced by the accent-shifting.

- 47 74-106. The responses are made by each Voice as adjured by Prometheus. All the Voices are in sympathy with the Titan, like the Æschylean chorus, but their nature-equilibrium is shudderingly disturbed by the conflict between Jupiter and his victim, as brought to focus in the memory of the awful curse, of which they are silently forgetful.

95-98. Cf. Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, ll. 560-569.

- 48 112-113. Prometheus again refers to the curse he uttered against Jupiter, which the Voices dare not repeat.

- 49 137. "love." The subject is the "thou" of l. 136, in the present editor's judgment, not "I." In ll. 113 *sq.* Prometheus accuses his mother Earth of scorning him. Her nearer movement and dimly compassionate voice now reassure him, and he acknowledges her love. Forman, however, prefers "I" as the subject.

- 51 175-177. Cf. *The Sensitive Plant*, ll. 224-251.

191-218. A finely imaginative picture of the fixity of the Past in Eternal Memory. The suggestion is Platonic.

- 52 212. "Hades." Pluto. "Typhon." A giant resister of Zeus, destroyed by his enemy.

213. "Evil." Note the allegorical suggestion. Contrast ll. 219-222.

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- 52 222 sq. The constant presence of Ione and Panthea, sisters of the remote and greater Asia, brings to Prometheus something of the consolation her own presence would assure. These spirits serve the purpose of a chorus, as now, lyrically anticipating the appearance of the Phantasm of Jupiter.
- 54 273. Zeus owed his throne to Prometheus. Cf. ll. 382-3; *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 240-269. Note the allegory here, — all power derives its authority from the spirit of truth and justice.
- 56 303. "It doth repent me." The operation of the law of necessity expressed in the curse as inevitable is not repented, but rather the spirit of malevolence found in ll. 286-295. Cf. l. 53 and note. The lyric outbursts of despair that follow suggest the inability of the purely *natural* mind of antiquity — facing the fact of Prometheus' captivity — to appreciate the meaning and power of unselfishness. Cf. Matthew Arnold's sonnet, *In Harmony with Nature*. Cf. also ll. 394-401.
- 312-313. Note the extraordinary emotional power of these iterations as prolonging the sense of failure and despair.
324. "serpent-cinctured wand." The caduceus, or wand of Mercury, surmounted by wings and having two serpents twined about it.
325. Mercury, or Hermes, tempts and taunts the Æschylean Prometheus. Shelley, however, makes him well disposed toward the sufferer.
- 57 343. "the Son of Maia." Mercury. There is a vindictive suggestion here of Jovean vengeance overtaking hesitancy, as in Strength's words to Hephestus, *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 73-75:
- "Dost thou flinch again,
And breathe groans for the enemies of Zeus?
Beware lest thine own pity find thee out."
- 58 347. "Geryon." "Gorgon." Fabulous monsters. Geryon had three heads and three bodies, and was slain by Hercules. The Gorgons were three sisters, Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa. Medusa was slain by Perseus.
348. "Chimæra." A fire-belching monster, destroyed by Bellerophon. "Sphinx." The Sphinx was sent by Juno to the Thebans, and devoured those of them who tried and failed to solve her enigmas. Oedipus solved one at last, and the Sphinx destroyed herself.
354. Cf. *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 21-22:
- "Thee loath, I loath must rivet fast in chains
Against this rocky height unclomb by man," etc.
- 59 372. "a secret." The secret is that Jupiter will take a wife — Thetis — whose child — Demogorgon — will cause his sire's downfall.

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- 59 399. "the Sicilian's." Damocles, a flattering courtier, over whose banqueting-chair the tyrant Dionysius suspended a keen sword by a horsehair, as a symbol of the insecurity of place and power.
- 61 427-428. Cf. *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 1107, 1116 sq. 438-439. These lines, witnessing the departure of Mercury on his mission (see ll. 366-371), are memorably beautiful.
- 62 446-447. Cf. *Macbeth*, Act III, Sc. 4, ll. 106, 107:
 " . . . Hence, horrible shadow!
 Unreal mockery, hence!"
- 455, 456. A favourite figure with Shelley. See note on *Adonais*, l. 297.
- 63 465. Cf. from Bacon's essay, *Of Deformity*: "Certainly there is a consent between the body and the mind, and where nature erreth in the one she ventureth in the other." Cf. also Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Act I, Sc. 1, ll. 14-31.
- 64 496-521. Note the evil heaviness of the flight and movement metrically suggested in this hag chorus. Cf. the Witch scenes in *Macbeth*, Act I, Scenes 1 and 3; Act IV, Sc. 1; and *Faust*, Walpurgis Night, Part I, Sc. 21.
- 66 540-577. The chants of the Choruses accompany the climax of the spiritual suffering of Prometheus, as he sees into the future tragedy of Christ (ll. 547-566), and of the failure of the French Revolution (ll. 568-577), both events, as Shelley believed, wrested from the control of Good and perverted to Evil. Prometheus is tempted thus to doubt the ultimate value of his own work for mankind.
- 69 598-616. Prometheus addresses the vision of Christ. Shelley's hatred of ecclesiasticism, of formal and legal religion, finds congenial expression here. See Introduction, pp. xix and xx.
 598. Cf. *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 301-302:
 "Chorus. And truly for such sins Zeus tortures thee,
 And will remit no anguish?"
- 70 628. Though this is a projected picture, it reflects back also upon the present situation in the drama — Prometheus wanting Asia's aid, and Asia Demogorgon's, to complete their freedom of spirit and of action.
 635. The invincible goodness of the Titan conquers the Fury's power longer to molest him. This great scene inevitably suggests the Temptation of Christ in the wilderness. See Matthew iv, 1-11; Luke iv, 1-13.
 640. A not infrequently recurring mood of Shelley finds brief expression here.
 641. Cf. *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 1245-1248.
- 71 647-656. Another picture of the French Revolution.
 665-672. The rhyme — not employed in the dialogue touching the Furies (ll. 440-443 and 522-525) — relieves

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- the verse and sympathetically anticipates the coming of the Spirits. "Their beauty gives me voice." (l. 760.)
- 73 695 sq. The Spirits have insight into the final triumph of Good, as the Furies into the long-persisting power of Evil. Each Spirit, instancing an action or attitude of high good, seeks to justify the faith of all the Spirit.
- 700-715. Cf. *The Cloud*, ll. 67-72.
- 719, 720. Cf. Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Act I, Sc. 2, ll. 195-212.
- 74 738-752. See Introduction, p. lxiii.
- 75 757. Cf. line 672.
770. Cf. *Adonais*, ll. 399-401.
- 76 786. Cf. *Macbeth*, Act I, Sc. 2, ll. 11, 12; Sc. 3, l. 38.
- 77 805. "responses." Accented on the first syllable. Cf. Act II, ll. 171, 525.
- ✓ 78 820, 821. The Furies' torments and the Spirits' consolation are alike incomplete. The Furies have derided the idea of love, and even the Spirits cannot ignore its apparent failures, yet in it alone lies hope. The memory of Prometheus and the words of Panthea both turn his thoughts toward Asia, the principle of that never-weary Love which animates and sustains the universe. See *Adonais*, ll. 481-486.
- 823, 834. Love, if she is to persist, must be united to Wisdom.

ACT II

SCENE I

- 79 12. The short line dwells for a moment with sad intensity upon the idea it expresses.
31. "The shadow of that soul." Panthea, messenger between Prometheus and Asia, sits within the shadow of the Titan. To Asia she is the shadow of Prometheus, to Prometheus the shadow of Asia. See l. 70.
- 80 36. Cf. ll. 61-92.
- 81 67. Cf. *Epipsychidion*, ll. 587-591.
- 94-106. Ione felt what Panthea felt, but more dimly, and did not understand the meaning of her dream. Ione represents Hope. Panthea, the more active of the two sisters, symbolizes Faith - the faith that Shelley felt in the ultimate 'Godness' of things. Note the derivation.
- 82 113, 120. These two lines again unite Prometheus and Asia through Panthea. See note on l. 31 above.
- 114-117. A beautiful picture of Faith.
- 83 131-203. "Follow! Follow!" The Dream utters the words of progress that all Nature sounds and echoes, the chorus-words that accompany for ever the "eternal process moving on." The beauty of Shelley's idea, or, rather, of its expression here, is extraordinarily moving.

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- 83 140. See note on *Adonais*, l. 140.
 84 156-159. Cf. *Ode to the West Wind*, ll. 57-61.

SCENE II

- 87 "Love and Faith are pursuing their journey through all human experience; and first they pass through the sphere of the Senses, or external life (Semichorus I); then through that of the Emotions (Semichorus II); finally, through that of the Reason and the Will (Semichorus III)." — Vida D. Scudder.
 221. "anemone." See note on *The Question*, l. 9.
 232 sq. See *Adonais*, ll. 145, 146.
 88 248. See Act II, Sc. 1, l. 67.
 89 270. A reference, no doubt, to the higher environment of Scene III.
 272-277. An evident reminiscence from *The Tempest*, always Shelley's admiration. See Act I, Sc. 2, ll. 386-394.
 281. "oozy." A favourite word with Shelley, as "odours" also in l. 294.
 90 298. "thwart." Perverse; ill-natured. "Silenus." A prophesying demigod, crowned with flowers, and usually represented as riding on an ass.

SCENE III

- 91 314. "Mænads." See note on *The Sensitive Plant*, l. 34.
 91 326. Note the great beauty of the figure here.
 93 384. This line keys the song of the Spirits. Asia and Panthea are now to descend to the ultimate Source and Ground of all things, to leave sensible Nature and confront the Law of Nature's being.

SCENE IV

- 94 411. Demogorgon's answers have the remoteness and changeless truth of their speaker's character.
 415-421. As the passage stands, "which" in line 415 seems to have no predicate. Shelley, however, surely intended "fills" as the predicate. Rossetti makes "when" (l. 415) "at," and Forman suggests "hear" (l. 416) for "or." If "breathe" were adopted for "in" in l. 416, the original image would perhaps be most apparent, though any of these changes would, of course, be hazardous.
 95 428. Cf. Act I, ll. 511-513; Act III, Sc. 4, l. 442.
 435. Note the rising emotional insistence in Asia's repetitions. She is face to face with the most obstinate of mysteries.

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- 96 446-448. These lines admirably express the Promethean character, — wisdom, and friendship for humanity.
 446-461. Cf. *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 241-277.
 462-503. Cf. *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 269-300; 512-575.
 464. "Nepenthe." The Homeric drug of forgetfulness. Cf. Poe's *The Raven*, l. 83. "Moly." A fabled plant given Ulysses by Hermes to save him from Circe's power. See the *Odyssey*, Book X, ll. 302-306. "Amaranth." An imaginary fadeless flower. It appears in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book III, Canto 6, stanza 45; and in Milton's *Lycidas*, l. 149, and *Paradise Lost*, Book III, l. 353.
- 97 489. Cf. *Mont Blanc*, l. 49 sq. See Introduction, pp. lx, lvi.
- 98 515-523. Cf. Act. I, l. 144. Behind and beyond Zeus, said Æschylus, stands Necessity (cf. *Prometheus Bound*, ll. 583-586), which is ultimate Lord of all. Shelley, with modern idealism, makes Love the Lord of Necessity (l. 523). To him, Love is the final idea of power, destiny, and Godhood. Cf. the following interesting passages:
 "The God of Power, even before we learn quite positively to conceive him as the God of Love, sometimes appears to us, despite his all-real Oneness, as somehow requiring another and higher if much dimmer God beyond him, either to explain his existence or to justify his being. This contradictory and restless search for a God beyond God, this looking for a reality higher still than our highest already defined power, appears in several cases, in our poet's [Browning's] work, as a sort of inner disease, about the very conception of the God of Power, and as the beginning of the newer and nobler faith. The God beyond God is in the end what gets defined for us as the God of Love. . . . The God beyond God appears in Caliban's theology, very explicitly, as 'the something over Setebos that made him, or he, maybe, found and fought.' 'There may be something quiet o'er his head.' . . . In far nobler form, Ixion rises from Zeus to the higher law and life beyond him. . . . He [Guido] falls helpless at last, and, even while he wrestles beneath hell's most overwhelming might, still, like Ixion, like Karshish, and like David, he conceives at last the Over-God, afar off, beyond the great gulf fixed; and this Over-God, mentioned in his final cry for help after all the powers, — after Grand Duke, Pope, Cardina, . . . St. Maria, God, — is Pompilia. . . . Euripides, too, in his way, found the Over-God, and found him in the world of love, beyond nature, and yet within man's heart." — Josiah Royce: *Browning's Theism* (Boston Browning Society Papers, 1886-1897).
 "There is an Entity, a Soul-Entity, as yet unrecognized . . . it is in addition to the existence of the soul; in addition to immortality; and beyond the idea of the deity. . . . I conclude that there is an existence, a something higher

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- than soul — higher, better, and more perfect than deity. Earnestly I pray to find . . . this Highest Soul, this greater than deity, this better than god." — Richard Jefferies: *The Story of My Heart*.
- "When we have broken our god of tradition, and ceased from our god of rhetoric, then may God fire the heart with his presence." — Ralph Waldo Emerson: *The Over-Soul*.
- 99 536. Contrast Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, ll. 446-451.
545. The Hour of Jupiter's dethronement, whose car Demogorgon now ascends (ll. 553-558).
- 100 562. The Hour of Prometheus' restoration.
- 566-577. Note the light and confident swiftness of these exquisite lines. As Demogorgon goes to banish Jupiter (Act III, Sc. 1), Asia and Panthea ascend to witness the release of Prometheus (Act III, Sc. 3).

SCENE V

- 101 587, 588. The Sun-God awaits the conclusion of the journey of Love, Child of Light (l. 631), whose own being illumines the cloud about the car (ll. 588-591).
- 102 597-608. Aphrodite (Venus), the goddess of love, was so created. Asia, its greatest Spirit-Exemplar, absorbs into her own being all other symbols and dispensers of love.
- 103 620. Cf. Browning's *Christmas Eve*, v, ll. 23-25: —
- "For the loving worm within its clod
Were diviner than a loveless god
Amid his worlds, I will dare to say."
- 625-648. The Voice of Prometheus anticipates the coming of Asia.
630. In Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, he speaks (Book II, chapter 19) of the lack of frankness in Italian eyes: "'Very strange, indeed, signor,' she replied, meekly, without turning away her eyes in the least, but checking his insight of them at about half an inch below the surface." Shelley wrote to Peacock of what, on the contrary, seemed to him "the mazy depth of colour behind colour with which the intellectual women of England and Germany entangle the heart in soul-inspiring labyrinths."
- 104 649-687. The song responds to the song of the Voice of Prometheus. There linger in it some notes of the Spenserian music. Cf. *The Faerie Queene*, Book II, Canto 12. Cf., for similar symbolic suggestions — the regaining of "the glory and the freshness" — Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*. Cf. also Henry Vaughan's *The Retreat*, ll. 21-32:
- "O how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!"

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That I might once more reach that plain
 Where first I left my glorious train;
 From whence th' enlightened spirit sees
 That shady City of palm tree !
 But ah! my soul with too much stay
 Is drunk, and staggers in the way: —
 Some men a forward motion love,
 But I by backward steps would move;
 And when this dust falls to the urn,
 In that state I came, return."

- 104 674. "Harmonizing." Accented on the second syllable.
 105 687. The antecedent of "which" is "shapes." The thought is that the shapes are so bright — "somewhat like thee" — that one cannot bear to look at them, and yet, once seen, their beauty destroys the beholder's rest.

ACT III

SCENE I

- 106 25. "Idran Ganymede." Ganymede was a beautiful Phrygian youth who was carried up from Mount Ida to succeed Hebe as cup-bearer to Jupiter.
 26. "dadal." See note on *Mont Blanc*, l. 86.
 40. "him." The soldier Sabellus. "Numidian seps." Seps is the name of a species of deadly serpents. See Lucan's *Pharsalia*, IX, for the allusion.
 43. Cf. Dryden's *Under Mr. Milton's Picture*, ll. 5, 6.
 107 61. Note the wrath and growing fear indicated by Jupiter's change of address as contrasted with l. 51, in which anticipative though as yet undefined dread is suggested.
 64-69. In these words, following the eloquent silence of Jupiter's recognition of his doom, "the wheel has come full circle." His appeal to the name of Prometheus is one of the most impressive dramatic moments in the drama. The Evil that opposed and oppressed the Good recognizes explicitly the superior power of its victim, and implores succour therefrom. Cf. Act I, l. 305.
 108 72-74. Cf. *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto 1, stanzas 6-14.
 81. Associate Jupiter's "ever, for ever" with the same words of Prometheus, Act I, ll. 23, 30, 636.

SCENE II

- 109 94-100. Cf. Matthew Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, ll. 556-572.
 94. As Forman suggests, "sinks" is understood after "eagle."

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- 109 107. "Proteus." A famous sea-god, on whom Neptune bestowed the gift of prophecy, and who assumed various and perplexing shapes.

SCENE III

- 110 139. Cf. Act II, Sc. 5, ll. 625, 631.
 111 143 sq. Shelley's longing for the crystallization — so to speak — of high moments finds frequent expression in both his life and his poetry. He was always on the verge of discovering a personal as well as a social Eden. Cf. *Epipsychidion*, ll. 513–591; and the following passage from Dowden's *Life*, vol. I, p. 127: "We must stay here," whispered Shelley — 'stay for ever.' This 'for ever' became afterwards a jest between the friends; for all Shelley's movements, sudden and erratic as the starts of a meteor — one of those that

'Caper

On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit' —

were to conduct him to some resting-place where he should abide 'for ever.'"

At the same time, we can hardly agree with Miss Scudder that this passage has a "merely pastoral prettiness," nor accept her stricture on l. 157 because it seems to be out of harmony with the theory of evolution. "Ourselves unchanged" expresses a common and here justly dramatic longing for peace and rest after long spiritual toil and suffering. Cf. ll. 194–196 as completing the meaning. Cf. also III, 4, 501–512.

- 112 148. "frozen tears." Stalactites and stalagmites.
 175, 176. "Enna." See note on *Song of Proserpine*. Enna was a Sicilian town in the "Himera" country.
 198. "Proteus." See note on Act III, Sc. 2, l. 107.
 113 206, 214. Cf. Act II, Sc. 1, ll. 156–159.
 211. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II, Sc. 1, ll. 172, 173; *The Tempest*, Act IV, Sc. 1, ll. 44–47; Act V, Sc. 1, ll. 102, 103.
 114 246, 247. See note on *Adonais*, ll. 348–351. Cf. the sonnet beginning "Lift not the painted veil." See also Act III, Sc. 4, l. 498.
 115 285. Cf. *The Tempest*, Act IV, Sc. 1, l. 184; Act V, Sc. 1, l. 241; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II, Sc. 2, l. 244.
 287. "Nysa." Scene of the worship of Bacchus, who was sometimes called Nysæus. "Maenad." See note on *The Sensitive Plant*, l. 34.
 116 298. "Praxitelean." Praxiteles was a peculiarly skilful and sympathetic Greek sculptor living nearly 500 years before Christ. Hawthorne has several interesting references to him in *The Marble Faun*.
 305. "the night of life." Cf. *Adonais*, l. 344.

SCENE IV

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- 116 314. "the delicate spirit." "This spirit has been likened to Goethe's Euphion, in the second part of *Faust*, although of course it has a wider meaning than the poet-child of Faust and Helena. The old, half inorganic Gaia, the crude material earth, is replaced, now that the harmony of man and nature has been restored, by this dainty and more rational spirit, who, childish at first, grows into swift maturity of intelligence and love by the end of Act IV." — Vida D. Scudder.
- 117 327. The bite of the dipsas serpent caused intolerable thirst. See Lucan's *Pharsalia*, IX.
- 118 348-351. Cf. *Hamlet*, Act III, Sc. 1, ll. 70-76.
359. "Well." The rather abrupt use of this colloquial expletive may be dramatically justified by the Spirit's quick, irrepressible boyishness, his eagerness to speak. Cf. l. 340.
363. Cf. Act III, Sc. 3, ll. 209-216.
376-385. Cf. from Browning's *Paracelsus*, in the last long utterance of Paracelsus, the passage beginning
"In my own heart love had not been made wise."
- 119 381, 382. Cf. Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, ll. 125-126; 238-239; 272-291.
404. "darkling." Cf. *King Lear*, Act I, Sc. 4, l. 207.
- 120 418. The "on" after "pasturing" is supplied at For- man's suggestion.
420. "Phidian." Phidias is the most famous of the Greek sculptors.
427. "amphisbænic snake." One having a head at each extreme.
- 121 432. "As I have said" is a strangely commonplace phrase for so sensitive a master of words as Shelley.
434-512. A passionately beautiful prophecy of the triumph of Love over Evil in mankind, the passing of the mechanical and tyrannous in law, religion and custom. Cf., for the philosophical weakness involved, the Introduction, p. lxvii. Yet Shelley's poetry must not be interpreted as ignoring the value of moral effort.
442. Cf. Act I, ll. 511-513; Act II, Sc. 4, l. 428.
457-466. Shelley's condemnation of social insincerity is a feeling one, as it had cause to be. What success of scheme or manœuvre, he felt, gained at the expense of one's self-respect and moral integrity, can compare with an unstained freedom of soul? For himself, as man and poet, he believed that honesty of speech and deed is the instinctive attitude and expression of the liberal soul. Cf. Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Lyric 110, ll. 4-7.
- 122 481. "imaged" is the past tense.
- 123 498. See note on Act III, Sc. 3, ll. 246, 247.
501-505. Cf. Act I l. 493.

ACT IV

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123 "At first he completed the drama in three acts. It was not till several months after, when at Florence, that he conceived that a fourth act, a sort of hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecies with regard to Prometheus, ought to be added to complete the composition."
—From Mrs. Shelley's note.

It is strange that Sidney Lanier, a critic so generally discerning, should have written as follows of this fourth act: "Act IV is the most amazing piece of surplussage in literature; the catastrophe has been reached long ago in the third act, Jove is in eternal duress, Prometheus has been liberated and has gone with Asia and Panthea to his eternal paradise above the earth, and a final radiant picture of the reawakening of man and nature under the new régime has closed up the whole with the effect of a transformation-scene. Yet, upon all this, Shelley drags in Act IV, which is simply leaden in action and color alongside of Act III, and in which the voices of unseen spirits, the chorus of Hours, Ione, Panthea, Demogorgon, the Earth and the Moon pelt each other with endless sweetish speeches that rain like ineffectual comfits in a carnival of silliness." — *The English Novel*, pp. 103, 104.

William Michael Rossetti, on the other hand, finds it "difficult to speak highly enough of the fourth act so far as lyrical fervour and lambent play of imagination are concerned, both of them springing from ethical enthusiasm. It is the combination of these which makes this act the most surprising structure of lyrical faculty, sustained at an almost uniform pitch through a very considerable length of verse, that I know of in any literature. One ought perhaps to except certain passages, taken collectively, in Dante's *Paradiso*."

Certainly, if Lanier's criticism were to stand, it would become necessary to curtail some of Shakespeare's plays and Thackeray's novels, as concluding with other than structurally necessary passages. Though it is true that the essential dramatic *action* is ended with the third act of *Prometheus*, yet the drama itself is incomplete, for the movement has been directed toward a catastrophe so stupendous and revolutionary that the reader instinctively feels — as Shelley felt — the need of another act, both to give reality in celebrant music to the central idea of the entire drama, and to relieve overcharged emotions. If Act III had been allowed to remain as the concluding act, the finale would have been one of ungrateful and almost unconvincing abruptness, and the aesthetic result one of a surprise and joy so unrelieved as to be almost painful. The "silver lining" apparent in the coming of Fortinbras

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after the catastrophe in *Hamlet*, hinting at the redemption of the tragic idea, and the exultant strains of Shelley's final act, serve alike one prime purpose, — the making of both creations more artistically credible.

Panthea and Ione here serve the function of an inter-linking and wonderingly interpretative chorus between the Spirit-songs and the duet of Earth and Moon, and again between these and the great injunctions of Demogorgon.

- 127 73-76. For the figure cf. Act I, Sc. 1, l. 456; *The Cenci*, Act I, Sc. 2, l. 14; *Adonais*, l. 297; *Hamlet*, Act III, Sc. 2, l. 250.

- 128 116. "dædal." See note on *Mont Blanc*, l. 86. Cf. Act III, Sc. 1, l. 26; Act IV, l. 416.

121, 122. Contrast *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills*, ll. 1-8; 66-69.

- 132 192. Cf. Chaucer's *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, ll. 267-268:—

"His even twinkled in his heed aright,
As doon the sterres in the frosty night."

206-235. With this vision of the Moon cf. *The Cloud*, ll. 45-58.

213. "Regard." Are regarded as; appear.

214-217. Cf. *The Cloud*, ll. 21-24.

- 134 266-268. Cf. Shakespeare's *King Henry V*, Act II, Sc. 3, l. 16.

281. "valueless." Invaluable.

- 136 319 sq. This spiritual coming together of Earth and Moon at once indicates the new and rapid growth of each under the law of love and satisfies the prediction of Asia in Act III, Sc. 4, ll. 394-398. The speakers are surely the Spirit of the Earth and the Spirit of the Moon. This is the new Earth of Act III, Sc. 4, the freed and rejuvenated spirit of Scene 3, not the old Earth of Act I. In this final act it has become "old enough" in its new life (cf. Asia's words in Act III, Sc. 4, l. 399) for complete delight and triumph. Æsthetically, this is a valuable study in interchanged metres, and the student should carefully examine the measures as corresponding to the presences and consciousnesses of Earth and Moon. Cf. Addison's famous ode, *The Spacious Firmament on High*, as exhibiting a brief moment of similar spiritual insight.

- 138 370-423. Literature contains no hymn of humanity more inspiring than this.

378. Cf. l. 245.

- 139 406. Cf. Coleridge's *Love*, ll. 1-4:

"All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame."

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- 141 453. Cf. *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, ll. 59, 60.
- 142 473. "Menad." See note on *The Sensitive Plant*, l. 34.
174. "Agave." Daughter of Cadmus, founder of Thebes.
175. "Cadmean." See note on *Ode to Liberty*, l. 92.
- 145 554 sq. Demogorgon's great utterance touches the root serenity that both conditions and is produced by discipline through Evil. The student will compare the Shakespeare of *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* with the Shakespeare of *Hamlet* and *Lear*. Both sorrow and joy are now tempered and controlled to a music undespairing and unexultant, but strong and calm and kind. Shelley's own firmest belief in the manner of Man's redemption is here expressed.
- 147 **The World's Wanderers.**
In Forman's opinion a stanza is wanting, the last word of which should rhyme with "billow."
- 148 **Song ("Rarely, rarely comest thou").**
Though this lyric is usually grouped with the poems of 1821, there exists at Harvard an autograph MS. dated "Pisa, May, 1820."
- 149 19. Note the metrical means employed to induce the "merry measure."
38-9. Shelley disliked the ordinary forms and conventions of "society."
- 150 48. Cf. "*When the lamp is shattered*," ll. 21-4.
- 150 **Song of Proserpine.**
In Greek mythology Persephone (Roman, Proserpine) was the daughter of Zeus (Jupiter) and Demeter (Ceres). While gathering flowers on the plains of Enna, in Sicily, with Artemis and Athena, she was seized by Pluto, god of the dead, and carried off to become Queen of Hades. She was permitted, however, to return to her mother during a portion of each year, and symbolizes vegetable life. Her story is told by Hesiod and Ovid. Cf. Swinburne's *Hymn to Proserpine*.
- 151 **Autumn: A Dirge.**
10. Cf. *Dirge for the Year*, l. 10.
- 152 **The Question.**
The sensuous beauty of this poem suggests comparison with Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*.
1-8. Cf. *Prometheus Unbound*, II, 1, 1-12.
9. "wind-flowers." Anemones. (From *ἀνεμος*, wind.)
10. "Arcturi." So-called because ever-blooming. The constellation of Arcturus never sets.
9-32. Cf. the famous flower-passages in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book III, Canto 6, stanza 45; Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II, Sc. 1, ll. 249-252; Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, stanza 5; Milton's *Lycidas*, ll. 142-151; Bacon's *Essay Of Gardens*.
13. "that tall flower." Probably the tulip.
21. "Our language has no line," says Palgrave, "modulated with more subtle sweetness."

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152 27. "sedge." Coarse grass or flags growing on the banks of lakes and rivers. Cf. Milton's *Lycidas*, l. 104.

153 Hymn of Apollo.

This and the succeeding *Hymn* were intended for use in a drama of Williams's. Apollo and Pan are contending before Tmolus for a prize in music. Apollo was the son of Zeus and Leto, and was the god of the sun, of divination, medicine, music, poetry, etc. (See ll. 30-34.)

154 Hymn of Pan.

The god Pan in Greek mythology was a son of Hermes and Callisto. He controlled the fields and woods, the flocks and the herds, and is traditionally represented as having horns and goat-like legs and feet. He was a master-musician, the inventor of "Pan's pipes," or the shepherd's flute. For circumstances of composition see note on *Hymn of Apollo*. Cf. Mrs. Browning's *A Musical Instrument*.

155 11. "Tmolus." The god of Mount Tmolus, in Lydia, father of Tantalus, and judge in a musical contest between Pan and Apollo.

13. "Peneus." Or, Salembria, a river in Sicily.

14. "Tempe." A vale in Thessaly, separating Olympus from Ossa.

15. "Pelion." A mountain in Thessaly, fabled to have been piled on Ossa, another mountain, by the giants, and directed against Olympus.

16. "Sileni." Satyrs and followers of Bacchus. "Sylvans." Wood-spirits. "Fauns." Creatures of Latin mythology, resembling the Greek satyrs.

26. "daedal." See note on *Mont Blanc*, l. 86.

30. "Manalus." A mountain in Arcadia, the original seat of Pan.

156 Arethusa.

Arethusa was a fountain in Ortygia, near Sicily, and Alpheus a river in the ancient Peloponnesus, whose course was at times subterranean. The legend therefore arose that Alpheus, the river-god, became enamoured of the nymph Arethusa, while she bathed in the stream, and pursued her, whereupon she was changed by Artemis, or Diana, into the Ortygian fountain. Alpheus continued his pursuit under "earth and ocean." Cf. Milton's *Arcades*, ll. 29-31: —

" . . . that renowned flood, so often sung,
Divine Alpheus, who by secret sluice,
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse."

Cf. also Milton's *Lycidas*, ll. 85, 132; and Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*: —

"Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea."

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156 3. "Acroceraunian." Acroceraunia was the ancient name of a promontory of Epirus.

24. "Erymanthus." An Arcadian mountain in the Peloponnesus.

157 60. "unvalued." Invaluable. Cf. Milton's *Lycidas*, l. 176:

"And hears the unexpressive [inexpressible] nuptial song."

Cf. also *Ode to Liberty*, l. 51; *Prometheus Unbound*, IV, 281, 378.

158 74. "Enna's." See note on *Song of Proserpine*.

158 The Cloud.

It was natural that Shelley's genius should take delight in things aerial, — birds, balloons, lightning, stars, winds, clouds. The sympathy shown in this familiar lyric with the "being and becoming" of the cloud testifies to the immediacy of his nature-vision, to his kinship with Blake and Browning rather than with Bryant or even, in general, Wordsworth.

159 11, 12. Cf. *Prometheus Unbound*, IV, 181-4.

160 45. Cf. *Letter to Maria Gisborne*, ll. 69, 70:—

" . . . when from the moist moon rains
The inmost shower of its white fire."

45 sq. Note the difference in thought between the cloud-drawn picture of the moon and the mortal's melancholy fancy. Cf. *To the Moon* and *The Waning Moon*, and cf. also Sidney's admirable sonnet, "With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the skies!"

52-4. Cf. Coleridge's "star-dogged Moon," *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, l. 212, and Wordsworth's *A Night-Piece*, ll. 11-20.

161 81. "cenotaph." An empty tomb, intended as a memorial rather than as a grave.

161 To a Skylark.

See Introduction, pp. xliii, lviii, and lxiv. "Here it was [at Casa Ricci], near bustling Leghorn, that Shelley and Mary, wandering on a beautiful summer evening 'mong the lanes whose myrtle-hedges were the bowers of fireflies,' heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired that spirit-winged song known to all lovers of English poetry—a song vibrating still with such a keen and pure intensity."—Dowden's *Life*, II, 331.

8. Some critics have held that the semicolon at the end of this line should be placed after line 7. This would be not only an unnecessary variation from the early editions but an indefensible one, the genius of the second stanza requiring a quick, exultant, ascending movement. The stress is palpably upon line 8 rather than line 7, since, as Professor Baynes points out, "in the opening verse of the poem the lark . . . is already far up in the sky."

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- 162 15. For "unbodied" Professor Craik substituted "embodied." This change also is wholly without warrant. The lark is a "blithe spirit," a "sprite," a "scorner of the ground." It may safely be said that too many corrupt passages in literature have become so through editorial blindness and perversity rather than through original creative carelessness.
32. The succeeding stanzas attempt to answer the question. Cf. Wordsworth's *To the Daisy* (second poem), stanzas 2-5.
- 163 65. Among all of Shelley's conquests over the apathy and heaviness of words there is none more triumphant than this felicitous line.
- 164 80. Cf. *To* — ("When passion's trance is overpast") and *Lines* ("When the lamp is shattered").
- 86 sq. Note the autobiographical value of the stanza.
- 165 101 sq. Cf. Poe's *Israfel*, ll. 45-51.
- 165 Ode to Liberty.
- "In the spring of the year [1820], moved by the uprising of the Spaniards, he had written his *Ode to Liberty*, in which the grave Muse of History is summoned to utter oracles of hope for the cause of freedom." — Dowden's *Life*, II, 343.
- The motto is taken from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV, stanza 98.
15. "a voice." Cf. Wordsworth's sonnet, *England and Switzerland*, 1802. "the same." A weak phrase, flouting the line. The "voice" reviews the rise of Liberty and appeals for her fuller welcome.
- 166 18. "dædal." See note on *Mont Blanc*, l. 86.
19. "island." A favourite image and idea with Shelley. Cf. ll. 108, 206. Cf. Introduction, p. xlv.
31. "then." A weak use.
38. "For thou wert not." Note that this phrasing is iterated in precisely the same place in stanzas 2 and 3. Contrast l. 72.
41. "sister-pest." Ecclesiasticism, or traditional religion. Cf. l. 83.
- 167 47. "dividuous." Dividing.
51. "unapprehensive." Unable to apprehend. See note on *Arctura*, l. 60.
- 69-75. Liberty a condition of art.
- 168 74. "that hill." The Acropolis.
- 87-90. Cf. *Adonais*, stanzas 52 and 54.
92. "Cadmean Maenad." A Theban worshipper of Bacchus. Euripides makes them nurses of young wolves. See note on *The Sensitive Plant*, l. 34.
93. "thy dearest." Athens.
98. "Camillus." Marcus Furius Camillus was a renowned Roman hero, who relieved his people when besieged by

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- the Gauls. "Atilius." Or, Regulus, a Roman consul, who, captured by the Carthaginians and sent to Rome to solicit peace, advised the Senate to continue the war. On his return to Carthage he was, as he expected, put to death.
- 169 103. "Palatinus." One of the seven hills of Rome
 106. "Hyrcanian." Hyrcania was an ancient Persian province, south of the Hyrcanian (Caspian) sea.
 110-113. Cf. Milton's *Lycidas*, ll. 39-43.
 114, 115. Cf. Milton's *Lycidas*, ll. 52-55.
 115. "Scald's." A Scald was an ancient Scandinavian minstrel. Among the Celts the word equals 'bard.'
- 171 119. "The Galilean serpent." Christianity.
 171 171-173. A reference to the French Revolution.
 175. "Anarch." Napoleon
 180. Cf. Gray's *The Bard*, stanzas 2 and 3.
 186. "Pitheecusa." An island in the Bay of Naples.
 "Pelorus." A Sicilian headland.
- 172 192. "Twins of a single destiny." England and Spain.
 194. "the dim West." Possibly America; possibly the Past, though this latter interpretation would hardly be in accord with Shelley's idea of the youth of Liberty; more probably the ripe Future of humanity, as the West is the day-old sun's glory and solace. "impress us." Mrs. Shelley suggests 'as' for 'us.'
196. "Arminius." An early German hero, who defeated the Romans.
 204. "thou." Italy.
 212. Cf. *Prometheus Unbound*, III, 4, 439.
- 173 226-240. Cf. Introduction, pp. xix and xx.
- 174 248. Cf. l. 55.
 254-255. Understand 'if wealth can rend.'
 258. "Eoan wave." Wave of dawn.
 266. Cf. Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*, l. 2.
- 175 271-285. The student will note the powerful felicity in general of Shelley's finales. See Introduction, p. lxiv.
 283. "great voice." Cf. Milton's *Lycidas*, l. 132.
- 175 **The Sensitive Plant.**
 In this lovely allegory Shelley expresses the cardinal truth of idealism and romanticism, that

"The One remains, the many change and pass;
 Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly."

Though the Spirit of Light and Love is impotent to prevent the apparent material decay of all things beautiful, it is potent in the world of ideas to redeem for ever from death and destruction. Cf. Browning's *Abt Vogler*, ll. 69 sq. Lady Mountcashell (Mrs. Mason), with whom the Shelleys were very friendly during their stay in Pisa, was, according to Medwin, "a superior and accomplished woman, and a great resource to Shelley, who read with her Greek. He

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- told me that she was the source of the inspiration of his *Sensitive Plant*, and that the scene of it was laid in her garden, as unpoetical a place as could be well imagined." It will interest the student also to note the following passage from a letter of Shelley to Leigh Hunt: "Williams is one of the best fellows in the world; and Jane, his wife, a most delightful person, who, we all agree, is the exact antitype of the lady I described in *The Sensitive Plant*, though this must have been a *pure anticipated cognition*, as it was written a year before I knew her."
- 176 13 sq. Cf. with this series of exquisitely wrought flower-pictures *The Question*, ll. 9-32, and see note on same.
- 177 17. "wind-flowers." See note on *The Question*, l. 9.
- 177 34. Menad. A bacchante, a frenzied female worshipper of Bacchus, bearing the thyrsus, a slight staff crowned with a pine-cone. Cf. *Prometheus Unbound*, II, 3, 314; III, 3, 287; IV, 473.
54. "asphodel." In Greek mythology a pale and delicate flower growing in Hades among the dead.
- 178 70-73. The last line of this stanza is rather obscure. The passage may be thus re-phrased: "The Sensitive Plant, unable to reveal its love, like the other flowers, in blossoms of beauty and fragrance, nevertheless on that very account was more richly dowered than they, since the love it so strongly felt but could not express, having no outlet ("where none wanted but it"), struck into the "deep heart" of the plant itself and expended all its power in gracing and purifying that heart." "could belong to the giver," i. e. the would-be giver; hence, ideally, a giver indeed.
- 179 98. Cf. *The Cloud*, ll. 41-42.
- 182 177. "Baïæ." See note on *Ode to the West Wind*, l. 32.
- 183 189. Cf. *A Dirge* ("Rough wind, that moanest loud.")
- 210-211. Cf. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, ll. 220-223. Shelley was very fond of Coleridge's poem.
- 220-221. Cf. Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Lyric 72, ll. 9-12.
- 181 230, 231. The sense will be apparent if "stretched" is mentally related to "hemlock," and "stified" to *all* the baneful weeds.
- 232-247. These stanzas show a marked reaction toward Shelley's interest in the horrible and sinister. See Introduction, pp. xi and xiv. Coleridge, in revising *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, omitted, after the first edition, the following stanza:—
- "His bones were black with many a crack,
All bare and black I ween:
Jet black and bare, save where with rust
Of mouldy damp and charnel crust
They're patched with purple and green."

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Would not *The Sensitive Plant* have gained in poetic power if Shelley had, similarly, made some modification here? Note the finer art shown in the more austere pictures of ll. 264-279.

185 256. "forbid." Accursed.

186 287. "griff." Grip; clutch.

302-303. Cf. *Adonais*, l. 344; Swinburne's sonnet, *On the Death of Robert Browning*.

188 To Night.

Cf. Longfellow's *Hymn to the Night*.

189 19. Rossetti uses the feminine pronoun, justifying the change by reference to ll. 10 and 11. It is probable, however, that in this instance "Day" and "the Day" appealed to Shelley's imagination precisely as the gender of the original pronouns indicates.

34, 35. Cf. *Prometheus Unbound*, II, 1, 15.

189 Sonnet to Byron.

Not technically a legitimate sonnet. The student should consult any work on poetics — such as *Gummere's Handbook* — for a discussion of the canonical sonnet forms. See Introduction, p. lxiv.

For remarks concerning the relations of Byron and

• Shelley, see Introduction, pp. xxxv, xxxvi, xl, xlvii, and xlviii.

6. "rise as fast and fair." Byron's *Cain*, *Heaven and Earth* and *The Vision of Judgment* were written in rapid succession, about this time.

190 To Emilia Viviani.

See Introduction, p. xlv, for an account of this beautiful and unfortunate girl. Cf. also Shelley's *Epipsychidion*, addressed to her.

191 To — ("Music, when soft voices die").

3. "odours." Note Shelley's fondness for this word as inducing sensuous appeal. Cf., with the stanza, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Act I, Sc. 1, ll. 1-16.

192 To — ("When passion's trance is overpast").

The haunting melancholy of this lyric finely expresses the poet's sense of the mutability of human life and of the incompleteness of human love. Cf. Shelley's remark to Gisborne: "I think one is always in love with something or other; the error . . . consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is, perhaps, eternal." Cf. also *Mutability* and *Lines* ("When the lamp is shattered").

10. Cf. Byron's *Elegy on Thyrza*, stanza 7, and his *Youth and Age*, stanza 5.

193 Mutability.

Cf. Robert Herrick's *To Daffodils*, Spenser's unfinished canto to Mutability (*The Faerie Queene*), and Bacon's last completed Essay, *Of Vicissitude of Things*. Cf. also Shelley's other *Mutability*.

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194 Sonnet — Political Greatness.

See note on *Sonnet to Byron*.

5. Shelley had slight enthusiasm for historical study as such.

8. "obscene." Ugly. Cf. *Prometheus Unbound*, IV, 95.

195 A Lament ("O World! O Life! O Time!")

8. Rossetti inserts "autumn" after "summer," most improperly, as regards both music and content.

197 Adonais.

See Introduction, pp. xlv, xlvi, lxi, lxiii, and lxiv.

The most notable personal elegies or elegiac poems in our language may be stated as follows: —

Author.	Title.	In Memory of
Unknown (Anglo-Saxon Period)	<i>The Wanderer</i>	The singer's patron.
Edmund Spenser	<i>Astrophel</i>	Sir Philip Sidney
John Milton	<i>Luculus</i>	Edward King
Percy Bysshe Shelley	<i>Adonais</i>	John Keats
Alfred Tennyson	<i>In Memoriam</i>	Arthur Henry Hallam
Matthew Arnold	<i>Thyrsis</i>	Arthur Hugh Clough
Robert Browning	<i>La Saisiaz</i>	Miss A. Egerton-Smith
Algernon Charles Swinburne	<i>Ave atque Vale</i>	Charles Baudelaire
Ralph Waldo Emerson	<i>Threnody</i>	His son
Walt Whitman	<i>When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed</i>	Abraham Lincoln

The more canonical and literary — by no means therefore the less vital — among these elegies, including *Adonais*, show the influence of the memorial idylls of Theocritus, Bion and Moschus. Shelley, more particularly, is indebted to Bion's *Lament for Adonis* and to Moschus's *Lament for Bion*. Keats's death, though the circumstances attending it and its meaning for him and for humanity are treated with poetic energy, is yet made but the occasion of a penetrating glance into the problems of physical decay and spiritual futurity. While Milton's elegy makes its chief burden clerical insincerity and undutifulness, corruption *versus* incorruption; Tennyson's, the difficult restoration of the indispensable minimum of faith; and Browning's, the intellectual veracity of the idea of the Soul; Shelley, for his part, wings through palpable darkness his flaming way into the slow sunrise of Eternal Love and Beauty. His own opinions of the poem are given freely in such passages as these: —

"You may announce for publication a poem entitled *Adonais*. It is a lament on the death of poor Keats, with some interposed stabs on the assassins of his peace and of his fame." (*Letter to Ollier*.)

"I have received the heart-rending account of the clos-

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ing scene of the great genius whom envy and ingratitude scourged out of the world. I do not think that if I had seen it before, I could have composed my poem. The enthusiasm of the imagination would have overpowered the sentiment.

"As it is, I have finished my Fleggy; and this day I send it to the press at Pisa. You shall have a copy the moment it is completed. I think it will please you. I have dipped my pen in consuming fire for his destroyers; otherwise the style is calm and solemn." (*Letter to Gisborne.*)

Shelley doubtless uses the name 'Adonais' to indicate his literary debt to Bion. Furnivall says that it is Shelley's variant for 'Adonias,' the women's yearly lamentation for Adonis.

The passage from Moschus, beginning the Preface, is rendered by Andrew Lang thus: "Poison came, Bion, to thy mouth — thou didst know poison. To such lips as thine did it come, and was not sweetened? What mortal was so cruel that could mix poison for thee, or who could give thee the venom that heard thy voice? Surely he had no music in his soul."

With the second paragraph of the Preface compare Byron's *Don Juan*, Canto XI, stanza 60: —

"Tis very strange the mind, that fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article."

The student will note, however, that Keats was more virile than these passages indicate. Cf. his own statement: "Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critic on his own works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* could possibly inflict; and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary reperception and ratification of what is fine."

199 1 sq. Cf. the opening of Bion's *Lament for Adonis* (Lang's translation): "Woe, woe for Adonis, he hath perished, the beauteous Adonis, dead is the beauteous Adonis, the Loves join in the lament. No more in thy purple raiment, Cypris, do thou sleep; arise, thou wretched one, sable-stoled, and beat thy breasts, and say to all, 'He hath perished, the lovely Adonis!'"

10. "Where wert thou?" Cf. Milton's *Lycidas*, l. 50; "mighty Mother." Urania, the Muse of Astronomy, or the spirit of heaven, inspirer of poetry. The Uranian Aphrodite of Shelley corresponds to the Cyprian Aphrodite of Bion. Cf. Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Lyric 37.

15. "one." An Echo.

18. "he." Adonais.

200 29. "He." Milton.

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200 35. "his clear sprite." Cf. Milton's *Comus*, ll. 381-382: —

"He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day."

36. "the third." Shelley ranks Homer, Dante, and Milton, in his *Defence of Poetry*, as the three great epic poets. In widening the category, he would almost certainly have given Shakespeare place among the prime three poets. In any case, the passage should not be interpreted too particularly.

40-41. "Tapers" and "suns" are, of course, contrasted.

48-49. Cf. Keats's *Isabella, or The Pot of Basil*.

51. "extreme." The stress falls equally on each syllable, as also in l. 68.

201 55. "that high capital." Rome.

65-72. Contrast with this picture the unreserve of the 'corruption' passage in *The Sensitive Plant*, ll. 232-247, and see note thereon.

73. "The quick Dreams." The subtle visions, emotions, imaginings, of the poetic consciousness. Note their appearance in *Prometheus Unbound*.

80. "their sweet pain." The sweet pain they cause, — "sweet," because of the joy of the visions; "pain," because their beauty is not capable of adequate expression in words. They are born, yet not born.

202 83. "moonlight wings." An exquisite touch. For similar associations, cf. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II, Sc. 1, ll. 29, 156-158; Act III, Sc. 1, ll. 175-176.

84. "is not dead." Cf. *Lycidas*, l. 166.

88. "a ruined Paradise." The mind of Adonais.

91-99. Cf., from Bion's *Lament for Adonis*, "He reclines, the delicate Adonis, in his raiment of purple, and around him the Loves are weeping, and groaning aloud, clipping their locks for Adonis. And one upon his shafts, another on his bow is treading, and one hath loosed the sandal of Adonis, and another hath broken his own feathered quiver, and one in a golden vessel bears water, and another laves the wound, and another from behind him with his wings is fanning Adonis." (tr. Lang.)

104. "with lightning and with music." Symbolizing the irresistible enchantment, the sheer impetus, of sure poetry. Cf. *Adonais* itself. "the damp death." The cold dews of death.

105. "its." The antecedent is "Splendour."

107. "clips." Surrounds or embraces. Anglo-Saxon, *clyppan*.

203 116. "pomp." Procession.

117. Note the melancholy charm of this fine figure.

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- 203 124. Cf. *The Cloud*, ll. 19-20.
 127-139. Cf., from Moschus's *Lament for Bion*, "And Echo in the rocks laments that thou art silent, and no more she mimics thy voice. And in sorrow for thy fall the trees cast down their fruit, and all the flowers have faded." (tr. Lang.)
133. "those." The lips of Narcissus, with whom the nymph Echo was in love. See note on l. 141.
- 204 140. "Phcebus." Apollo. "Hyacinth." Hyacinthus was a son of Amyclas and Diomedé, and was greatly loved by Apollo, who accidentally slew him. The flower which bears his name sprang from his blood.
141. "Narcissus." Son of Cephissus and the nymph Liriope. He became enamoured of his own image, conceiving it to be a nymph, and killed himself in chagrin at his failure to reach it.
145. "lorn nightingale." Cf. Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*.
146. "melodious pain." Cf. Matthew Arnold's *Philomela*:
 "Hark! from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
 What triumph! hark! what pain!"
- 151-153. A reference to the critical attack upon Keats's *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review*.
- 154 sq. Spring is at hand, but its reappearance has no counterpart in the revival of Adonais. Cf. *In Memoriam*, Lyric 38, and also Moschus: "Ah me, when the mallows wither in the garden, and the green parsley, and the curled tendrils of the anise, on a later day they live again, and spring in another year; but we men, we, the great and mighty, or wise, when once we have died, in hollow earth we sleep, gone down into silence; a right long, and endless, and unawakening sleep." (tr. Lang.)
- 205 179. "sightless." Unsighted; invisible.
- 187-189. Cf. *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills*, ll. 1-16.
- 206 190-216. Urania, urged by Misery, Dreams, and Echoes, hastens to Rome, to seek the death-chamber of Adonais.
195. "their sister's song." See ll. 13-18.
- 208-216. Cf. Bion's *Lament for Adonis*: "... but Aphrodite with unbound locks through the glades goes wandering, — wretched, with hair unbraided, with feet unsandalled, and the thorns as she passes wound her and pluck the blossom of her sacred blood." (tr. Lang.)
- 207 217-261. Urania's lament.
- 227-232. Cf. Bion's *Lament for Adonis*: "Abide with me, Adonis, hapless Adonis, abide. . . . Awake, Adonis, for a little while, and kiss me yet again, the latest kiss! Nay kiss me but a moment, but the lifetime of a kiss. . . ." (tr. Lang.)
228. "heartless." In that Adonais has her heart.

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- 207 234. Cf. Bion's *Lament for Adonis*: "... while wretched I yet live, being a goddess, and may not follow thee!" (tr. Lang.)
 235-240. Cf. Bion's *Lament for Adonis*: "For why, ah overbold, didst thou follow the chase, and being so fair, why wert thou thus overhardy to fight with beasts?" (tr. Lang.)
- 208 245. "obscene." See note on *Sonnet — Political Greatness*, l. 8.
 250. "Pythian." Byron, who castigated his early critics in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. The Pythian Apollo, slayer of the Python, is referred to.
- 209 262-315. The pastoral mourning of the mountain-shepherds, the fellows of Adonais.
 264. "The Pilgrim of Eternity." Byron. Cf. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.
 268. "Ierne." Ireland.
 269. "sweetest lyrist." Thomas Moore. These references are poetic, not particular.
 271-297. These three stanzas contain Shelley's portrait of himself.
 274-276. Actæon was a hunter who chanced to see Artemis and her maidens bathing, and was on that account changed into a stag and pursued to his death by his own hounds.
 278-279. Cf. Tennyson's *The Passing of Arthur*: —
 "His own thought drove him like a goad."
- 210 297. Cf. *Prometheus Unbound*, I, 456; IV, 73, 74; *The Cenci*, I, 2, 14; Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act III, Sc. 2, l. 250.
 306. A reference to the many troubles of Shelley's short life. Cf. the following passage from a letter to Godwin (Feb. 26, 1816): "But he [Turner] is apt to take offence, and I am too generally hated not to feel that the smallest kindness from an old acquaintance is valuable."
 312-315. The reference is to Leigh Hunt, friend and lover of Keats. At Hunt's home the two poets first met.
- 211 316-324. Cf. the prefatory passage from Moschus. There is no necessary conflict here with ll. 11 and 193. Precise and unvarying consistency in figurative expression does not enter into Shelley's theory of art.
 316-333. The critic scourged.
 334-396. An imaginative adventuring into the realm of the Eternal.
 340. Cf. l. 370, and note thereon.
- 212 343. Revert to ll. 19 and 84. Cf. *Lycidas*, l. 166.
 344. "the dream of life." A phrase peculiarly characteristic of Shelley's genius and philosophy. See Introduction, pp. lx and lxi. Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act IV,

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Sc. 1, ll. 68-69; Act V, Sc. 1, ll. 208-209; and Swinburne's sonnet, *On Robert Browning*:—

"He held no dream worth waking: so he said,
He who stands now on death's triumphal steep,
Awakened out of life wherein we sleep
And dream of what he knows and sees, being dead."

- 212 346. "phantoms." Cf. Bryant's *Thanatopsis*, ll. 63-64.
348-351. Cf. Walt Whitman's *Pensive and Faltering*:—

"Pensive and faltering,
The words, *the dead*, I write;
For living are the dead;
(Haply the only living, only real,
And I the apparition — I the spectre.)"

Cf. also *The Sensitive Plant*, ll. 304-315; *Prometheus Unbound*, III, 3, 247-248. Plato and Æschylus present similar ideas.

356. Cf. ll. 462-463.

366. Cf. Bion's *Lament for Adonis*: "Cease, Cytherea, from thy lamentations, to-day refrain from thy dirges." (tr. Lang.)

- 213 370-387. Cf. with this high pantheistic outburst kindred passages in several of the great elegies: *Lycidas*, ll. 183-185; *In Memoriam*, Lyrics 46 and 130; *Thyrsis*, stanzas 18-19; etc.

- 214 397-414. The eager welcome of Adonais by those of his spiritual kindred, who, like him, were cut off before maturity.

399. "Chatterton." Thomas Chatterton (1752-70) was a young romantic poet of great promise, who slew himself at eighteen.

401. "Sidney." Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) was an Elizabethan writer and statesman, who died in the battle of Zutphen, aged thirty-two.

404. "Lucan." Marcus Annæus Lucanus (A. D. 39-65), a Spaniard by birth and a Roman by citizenship, wrote the epic *Pharsalia*. Condemned to death for conspiring against Nero, he took his own life at twenty-six.

415-495. The concluding apostrophe is addressed by the poet largely to his own heart, as affected by the fact of death and the mystery of the future.

- 215 438-450. A beautiful picture of the English burying-place at Rome. See Introduction, p. lxi.

- 216 444. "one keen pyramid." In memory of Caius Cestius.
451-457. Shelley's three-year-old son William was buried here.

460-464. This strong, serene passage unlocks the heart of Shelley as poet and thinker. See note on l. 344.

- 217 478-486. The hope and aspiration of all the great ro-

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- mantic poets are in these lines.—Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Emerson, Keats himself.
- 217 480–481. Cf. Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, stanzas 5 and 9; cf. also Shelley's *Essay, On a Future State*.
- 218 Lines ("When the lamp is shattered").
Cf. *To* — ("When passion's trance is overpast").
- 219 25. The poet is still addressing Love, who should not choose for his cradle a weak human heart.
- 220 **To Jane — The Invitation.**

This and the following two poems were written and addressed to Jane Williams, wife of Lieutenant Edward Elliker Williams. See Introduction, pp. xlv and xlviii.

Parts of this and the succeeding poem were originally published by Mrs. Shelley as a unit of poetry, entitled *The Pine Forest of the Cascine near Pisa*.

- 221 29 sq. Cf. Emerson's *April*.
- 222 **To Jane — The Recollection.**

9. The student will note that the metre of the introductory section is modified in the succeeding sections, to give unity of movement to the "recollection" proper. Note also the finely vagrant effect of the alliterative first foot in l. 9, and of the change from iambus to trochee in "forest."

- 223 24. "serpents interlaced." Shelley, and Browning as stimulated by Shelley, were imaginatively much interested in snakes. Byron, indeed, called Shelley "the Snake," on account of his "bright eyes, slim figure, and noiseless movements." Cf. *Alastor*, ll. 228, 325, 438; *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto I, stanzas 8–33; *To Edward Williams*, stanza 1; *Adonais*, l. 197; *Mont Blanc*, l. 101; *Ode to Liberty*, ll. 119, 210; song of Beatrice in *The Cenci*; *Prometheus Unbound*, I, 633; II, 4, 402; III, 2, 72; III, 4, 427; IV, 305, 567; *The Assassins*, chapter iv.

35. Note the realistic effect of the conjunction of the iambus, "sy wood" with the trochee, "pecker."

42. The Trelawny MS. has "white." "Wide" is preferable as deepening the antithesis between the remote distance and "the soft flower beneath our feet."

- 224 55 sq. Cf. *The Cloud*, ll. 56–58.
- 225 **With a Guitar, to Jane.**

Trelawny thus describes his discovery of Shelley in the pine forest, where he sat composing the present poem: "The strong light streamed through the opening of the trees. One of the pines, undermined by the water, had fallen into it. Under its lee, and nearly hidden, sat the Poet, gazing on the dark mirror beneath, so lost in his bardish reverie that he did not hear my approach. There the trees were stunted and bent, and their crowns were shorn like friars by the sea breezes, excepting a cluster of three, under which Shelley's traps were lying; these

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overtopped the rest. To avoid startling the Poet out of his dream, I squatted under the lofty trees, and opened my books. One was a volume of his favourite Greek dramatist Sophocles . . . and the other was a volume of Shakespeare. I then hailed him, and, turning his head, he answered faintly:

"Hollo, come in."

"Is this your study?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered, "and these trees are my books — they tell no lies. You are sitting on the stool of inspiration," he exclaimed. . . . "Listen to the solemn music in the pine-tops — don't you hear the mournful murmurings of the sea?"

"Jane, with her grace, and suavity, and bland motion and soothing words, was conceived by him as the dispensation of an exquisite felicity, to which her husband had a first claim, but the overflow of which might be Shelley's own. How could he adequately express his pleasure in her gentleness, her penetrating charity, her ineffable tenderness? She should be the Queen of Amity and halcyon hours with Edward Williams for a fortunate Prince Consort, and he should be her humble troubadour; or call the pair Ferdinand and Miranda, with Shelley for their faithful Ariel." — Dowden's *Life*, II, 474.

See Introduction, p. xii, for a comparison of Shelley with Ariel, the sprite of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. See also note on *Ode to the West Wind*.

- 228 90. For "Friend" several editions have "Jane." The former word is not incongruous with the Ariel-Miranda fancy.

Poet out of
opened his
dramatist,
Shakespeare.
he answered

any books —
'inspiration,'
music in the
murmurs of

and motions,
the dispenser
had a first
Shelley's own.
in her gentle-
tenderness?
eyond hours,
Consort, and
all the pair
their faithful

Shelley with
also note on

Jane." The
riel-Miranda